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BARNET *Post.*

October 2025 • barnetpost.co.uk

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26th Sep



Waxing
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19%/0.49

Full Moon
6th October



31st Oct



Waxing
Gibbous
69%/0.52

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GROW, the community farm at The Totteridge Academy, recently held an open day

[Read more on Page 10](#) ▶

Conservatives slam VAT on schools policy as Hendon councillor is disqualified for being a teacher

BY DAVID FLOYD

Barnet Conservatives have hit out at the “real human costs” of the Labour government’s policy of charging VAT on private school fees after a Hendon ward councillor was disqualified from his role for being a state school teacher.

Joshua Conway is headteacher of a small independent Jewish school which has successfully applied to join the state sector after the 20% VAT levy introduced by Keir Starmer’s government, which combined with other rising costs to make its financial model unsustainable.

Under the Local Government Act, Cllr Conway is now ineligible for his role at the town hall as

teachers are not allowed to serve as elected members of the local authority with financial responsibility for their workplace.

Reflecting on the situation, Cllr Conway said: “I am deeply saddened. I love serving both my school and my community. It feels wrong to be forced to choose. This wouldn’t have happened if it weren’t for the Labour government’s envy tax on independent schools.”

Barnet Conservatives say it highlights the wider shortcoming of VAT policy and are urging the government to reconsider its position in light of these unintended consequences.

Conservative group leader Peter Zinkin said: “This is Labour’s tax raid in action – inflicting real human costs on dedicated

public servants and forcing closures or conversions.”

Ending the VAT exemption for independent schools was one of the incoming Labour government’s election pledges and was introduced in January.

Speaking to ITV in December 2024, Chancellor Rachel Reeves said: “I recognise a lot of parents work hard to be able to send their children to private schools but all parents are aspirational for their children, including the 94% of children in our state schools.”

She added: “Every single penny of that money will go into our state schools to ensure every child gets the best start in life, and that is so often through being able to recruit and retain the best teachers.”

In a statement, Barnet Council said: “Following the disqualification of Joshua Conway, a by-election will be held for one councillor in the Hendon ward. The date of the election will be confirmed when a ‘Notice of Election’ is published on the council’s website.

“Cllr Joshua Conway was disqualified because of a change of status in his employment. By law, a person is disqualified from being a member of a local authority if they are employed in a school that is maintained by the local authority.”

In a subsequent statement, Barnet Council confirmed that the by-election would take place on Thursday 30th October.

Residents who are not yet registered to vote can do so online at: barnet.gov.uk/elections-and-voting/voting/register-vote



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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Published on 26/09/25

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Council’s vague position on football club return



Barnet FC’s proposal to build a ‘New Underhill’ stadium was rejected by councillors in July Credit David Floyd

BY GRACE HOWARTH, LOCAL DEMOCRACY REPORTER

Barnet Council’s position on Barnet Football Club’s return to the borough appears vague following rejected proposals and confusion over alternative sites.

The League Two football club, currently based in neighbouring

borough Harrow, submitted plans to build a stadium with a capacity for 7,000 spectators on Barnet Playing Fields, close to the site of their old home in Underhill.

However a strategic planning committee meeting on 14th July saw the plans rejected.

Although there was general support from the committee for the club’s return to Barnet, council officers expressed concern the development was inappropriate as it was within the Green Belt and would lead to a loss of public open space.

Divisions were highlighted by two campaign groups, Bring Back Barnet and Save Barnet Playing Fields, which sat on opposite sides of the debate.

However, confusion over the existence of alternative sites ensued as comments made at a full council meeting on 8th July were brought up.

When asked by Conservative councillor David Longstaff what the council’s “preferred site” would be, the council leader said three or four sites had been mentioned to the football club and the council was awaiting a response.

At the strategic planning meeting it was clear these sites were not publicly known.

The council then backtracked two days later, on the 16th, saying it had “never offered” the football club alternative sites but rather there had been an “initial discussion” with Barnet FC that explored “potential” locations “several years ago”.

A Freedom of Information (FOI) request submitted in August showed a meeting on 20th July 2022 took place, two months after Labour took control from Conservatives.

Although the meeting was “un-minuted” the FOI showed that leader Barry Rawlings, the previous chief executive John Hooton, the executive director for communities, adults and health Dawn Wakeling, and the assistant director of greenspaces and leisure Cassie Bridge, were in attendance.

Responding to questions over why Cllr Rawlings viewed the football stadium issue as important enough to take the chief executive and other senior officers to meet the club, and whether he had any plans to meet with the club again following the failed application, a Barnet Labour spokesperson said: “Barnet FC requested a meeting just after the local elections in May 2022 to discuss their wish to return to the borough.

“We always said we would welcome the club’s return to Barnet if a suitable site could be found.”

Council considering ‘hybrid model’ for some services as Capita contracts end

BY GRACE HOWARTH, LOCAL DEMOCRACY REPORTER

Barnet Council has proposed a ‘hybrid delivery model’ for its local services.

The council has gradually been returning a range of outsourced council services from its Capita contracts, which have been in place since 2013.

Services including planning, highways, environmental health, estates, building services, facilities, print, human resources, payroll and finance have so far returned to council control, following the Labour administration taking over from the Conservatives in 2022.

Elements of the customer support group (CSG) contract, namely IT, revenues and benefits including business rates and customer services contracts have been extended to end in June 2026 and September 2026.

At a cabinet meeting on Tuesday, 16th September councillors decided the future of these remaining CSG

services currently run by Capita.

In an approach described as a “pragmatic service by service review” with a focus on affordability a ‘hybrid delivery model’ is being reviewed for the remaining services.

A report says this model will enable “strategic control, flexibility and transformational capability” while also “considering the financial impact of in-sourcing all services”.

Effectively, services such as IT could be split with some services using an ‘in-house strategy’ and some ‘outsourced operation’.

At an overview and scrutiny committee meeting on Friday 11th September Barry May, a council officer, said: “The key difference with these services are they’re mainly based outside of the borough, they’re mainly shared resources, quite high transactional services, with some differences to the services already brought in-house.”

He added the “hybrid” approach gave residents and the council “the best of both worlds” and that finding a provider to deliver “services in the same way” as they had been previously would be difficult.

Conservative committee member Richard Cornelius asked for reassurance on the cost elements of the approach.

In response, Barry said until a “formal procurement” had taken place a “true picture” of the cost element could not be given.

He added: “Once we have full procurement done, we’ll have full cost, and full terms of conditions and that will come back early next year when we’re making these decisions. We have a year of the contracts left.”



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NEWS

Edgware residents feel let down by council after town centre redevelopment vote

After controversial plans for The Broadwalk Centre received outline consent from Barnet Council's strategic planning committee in July, Leïla Davaud went to ask local residents for their reactions

On Edgware's Station Road, buses stream in and out without pause. They pour into the bus station, swap passengers, and swiftly head back onto the road. Inside the ageing building, people wait patiently for their ride, coffee in hand, while others head across to the nearby tube.

Watching this well-rehearsed routine, Anuta Zack, spokesperson for campaign group Save Our Edgware, shakes her head: "This bus station is one of the busiest in London, with 3,500 services a day," she says. The redevelopment proposes to demolish the existing building and replace it with a loop system beside the tube station, on the site of the current drop-off point.

"There are three problems with what Ballymore is offering," she continues. "First, it's smaller, when what we need is something bigger. Second, commuters will be left waiting outside in the rain, instead of sitting inside with a hot beverage as they can now. And third, buses will be forced to queue back onto Station Road, which is already gridlocked."

Anuta steps out of the building, then turns back to face it. "Picture this," she says. "The station is knocked down and in its place rise tower blocks up to 29 storeys high."

Crossing towards The Broadwalk shopping centre, she gestures again: "Take this 35-year-old building, knock it down, and picture even more towers. We lose two functional community spaces, only to build an enormous dormitory for people who won't even be able to move because the roads and transport will be rammed."

Inside the shopping centre, developer Ballymore's offices display posters of its vision. Kate Smith studies them, frowning. She says: "I get the idea. It looks great on paper. But do we have to knock down the entire town centre, places we actually use and care for, in order to build something so... Manhattan? We're in the suburbs of London. Most of us moved here because we like the suburban life. This seems exaggerated to me."

Eavesdropping, Jake Mortimer takes a step towards the same posters. However, his reaction is quite different. He says: "I moved here last year for work so I don't have the same attachment to the town. I have to admit, if it does look like these images, it could be really cool. It's like living in the city but without the madness. We're used to living so close to each other now, I don't see the problem."



▲
Edgware Bus Station
Credit: Leïla Davaud

He shrugs and walks off towards the car park, also meant to disappear to make way for new flats.

That particular space is what former architect Abe Hayeem is fighting to protect. He asks: "Do they expect us, and the thousands moving into these towers, to give up our cars and stay locked in?"

He adds: "We wouldn't even be able to cycle, since there is no plan for proper cycling infrastructure in the scheme. It's what I'd call a complete planning disaster. You can't impose national housing numbers on a suburban town centre and expect it to work."

Another of his concerns is the delivery time. He says: "What they are planning for would take decades to build. What happens to us in the meantime?"

"I may not still be alive by then but people will have to live through this nightmare and I think they realise it, because the councillors are receiving complaint letters by the thousands that take the whole scheme apart in every aspect."

Helen Simons shares those concerns and more. "This is my home and I'm scared," she says.

"If the redevelopment goes ahead as it's presented now, I don't know if I'll be able to stay."

Living with a disability, she worries most about healthcare.

"I already struggle to get appointments. How do they expect to treat thousands more? They're knocking down our two biggest pharmacies and Redhill Clinic, and we've had no explanation of how or when they'll be replaced."

Local doctor Alan Rosenfelder doesn't think the numbers add up. He says: "For 10,000 people you need five full-time equivalent GPs. Lane End and Penshurst Gardens surgeries already serve 12,000 and 7,000 patients between them, and most of their doctors are stretched. Recruitment is in crisis."

"They promise new surgeries but won't give details. It won't be enough, and residents will lose out. This is very wrong."

If the plans presented by the developers are coming under fire

from residents, anger also focuses on how councillors have handled the situation.

Resident Catia Gimmi says sharply: "I've always tried to participate in Edgware's life and its community. Part of my role as a teacher is to educate children about democracy, so they have the tools to do the same. But this approval destroys everything they learn, because it shows that votes don't matter. Councillors promised to fight tower blocks, and then they waved this through."

"It's a betrayal. They've already decided without listening to us. That's so hard to accept. It's jarring. Everything we teach our children about voting and making their voices count feels meaningless nowadays and, with our schools already overstretched, how are we supposed to welcome thousands more families?"

Barnet Council insists the decision amounts only to outline consent, not the final design, with each phase still needing detailed approval and safety checks. But for many in Edgware, those assurances ring hollow. On Station Road, the buses continue their endless loop and for some residents, uncertainty and mistrust stick. "Edgware isn't at death's door," Anuta Zack says. "It just needs care. We deserve something better than this."

A spokesperson for developers Ballymore told *Barnet Post*: "This transformational regeneration development will breathe new life into Edgware's town centre for residents, businesses and visitors through its £1.7 billion investment over a ten-year period."

"During a housing crisis with delivery at a record low the development will deliver 3,365 much needed new homes, including 1,150 affordable homes as well as 463 student accommodation units. Since 2020, Ballymore and Places for London have engaged with over 3,300 community members through 170 meetings and events."

"This extensive engagement has resulted in over 2,600 positive representations for our outline planning application. LBB's decision to resolve to grant our outline planning application was a welcome recognition of the support that exists for the proposals."

“
It's a betrayal.
They've already
decided without
listening to us
”

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Between 2007 and 2022, the number of local journalists employed by major news publishers in the UK dropped by two thirds from 8,847 to 2,830.

And 293 local newspapers have closed since 2005. We make local news freely available to people in Barnet but local journalism is not free to produce.

Last year, the Post published 1,232 news stories. We printed and distributed 180,000 free copies of the newspaper.

We ran news stories on important issues such as

major planning applications, amplifying local people's views while explaining how decisions were reached.

We published features on local arts events and the challenges faced by the borough's charities.

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MIDDLESEX UNIVERSITY POWERING THE PUBLIC SECTOR IN BARNET

When Barnet's hospitals face nursing shortages, schools struggle to find teachers, and police forces recruit new officers, Middlesex University has become central to the solution. Middlesex graduates and students are now essential to the delivery of public services in Barnet, London and beyond.

Every year Middlesex trains around 1750 nurses and midwives, more than 450 teachers and 230 social workers. Through the award-winning Police Education Consortium of four universities, Middlesex has helped train more than 3000 police officers since 2019.

In social work and environmental health, Middlesex is working directly with local authorities in London to bridge the gaps that impact community services.

"The critical shortages we face in these key public sector areas affects us all" says Head of Apprenticeships and Skills Professor Darryll Bravenboer. "By working to grow the number of degree apprentices, we are seeking to deliver on our civic duty as a university and play a key role in enhancing the public good."

At the heart of Middlesex's public sector training facilities is the Saracens StoneX stadium, which contains one of the UK's most advanced simulation wards. It's equipped with cutting-edge virtual and augmented reality technology including Lucina VR equipment – the first in a UK university to simulate an entire birth.



"The training at West Stand is like a real hospital," says Brittany Gage, studying for a Nursing Associate degree apprenticeship. "It's such a good learning environment. All the lecturers' encouragement and expertise have been invaluable."

The impact extends beyond Middlesex's current students too. Local T Level students have visited the virtual hospital to take part in taster midwifery sessions and build credits for their courses. This is a fantastic chance for them to find out what working in the NHS is like and whether it is for them.

In 2024, the University won £3.3 million from the Office for Students to set up the Healthcare Education Consortium with six other universities. This is working with NHS Trusts to expand the number of healthcare degree apprentices, boosting the health service workforce.

The results are already visible. Middlesex Health, Social Care and Education students have won recognition for their achievements, including awards in the Most Inspirational Student Nurse, Student Midwife of the Year and Educator of the Year categories from the Student Nursing Times.

The quality of training has earned wider recognition too. Middlesex's Initial Teacher Education courses at secondary level are rated 'Outstanding' by Ofsted, with inspectors praising a "highly aspirational and rich training programme" enabling trainees to be "fully ready for and confident about embarking on their future career". They cite "top notch" mentoring and strong communication between partner schools and university staff.

In addition to a one-year postgraduate teacher apprenticeship, Middlesex has launched a four-year primary teacher degree apprenticeship to upskill teaching assistants as well as offering school-leavers a chance to earn while studying.



"The programmes enable schools to mould apprentices to their exact needs," says Professor Bravenboer. "They are also proven to increase social mobility, providing apprentices from underserved communities with the opportunity to qualify as a teacher, have a clear career pathway and realise their full earning potential."

This approach reflects Middlesex's understanding of its role as more than an educational institution. The university partners with local government, professions, businesses, and charities to help make Barnet into an inspiring place to learn, work and live.



COMMENT

Fighting the borough's corner to deliver growth in a climate of uncertainty

BY CLLR SIMON RADFORD

►


Cllr Simon Radford, cabinet member for financial sustainability

This summer, councils up and down the country have been assessing how proposed government changes to central funding for local authorities would affect their finances.

The current way of calculating how much money is allocated to a council is well over a decade out of date and fails to reflect current costs. The new government has recognised this and has consulted on proposals to get us to fairer funding, a process called the Fair Funding Review.

Unfortunately, while we gain in some areas of the proposed formula, estimates suggest we would see central funding for children's services drop by £50m, placing the council's budget under even greater pressure. This alone would leave us with a mountain to climb to achieve a balanced budget and to deliver on our growth agenda.

Barnet is one of the few areas in the country to have hit its growth targets, putting us in the top ten councils for building homes at pace. We are also on target to deliver 1,000 council homes,



but our growth agenda and the delivery of council services, continue to be at risk.

Years of austerity have effectively halved the council's budget since 2010 and, with unprecedented demand for complex services we have a legal duty to provide, and their costs at an all-time high, it is now running on little more than fumes.

We are working hard to make ends meet and continue to deliver for residents. Earlier this year, the council received £55.7m in 'exceptional financial support' (essentially permission to borrow money) from the government to close our funding gap for this financial year. £23m has also been identified through council savings and income generation. We have appointed an 'improvement partner', an independent critical friend to work with the cabinet and the council's senior management to identify new ways of delivering statutory services with reduced budgets.

We are in the same situation as many other councils and we are fighting Barnet's corner. Cabinet members and council officers have submitted a response to the government's consultation on funding reforms, and we are lobbying government ministers to call for five vital changes to the proposed formula for calculating funding to reflect today's realities and pressures. These changes include taking full account of housing costs and reflecting the true cost of providing temporary accommodation, ensuring that prevention services for children and young people are financially supported, funding all additional burdens placed on local authorities, and making speedy reforms in key policy areas, like adult social care, to ensure complex and expensive support for people of all ages is financially sustainable.

We will work with the newly appointed secretary of state for local government Steve Reed and minister for local government Alison McGovern to outline how they can help well-run councils like Barnet reach financial sustainability while delivering on the government's growth agenda.

The government must recognise that for us to reach financial sustainability and keep delivering their agenda for residents, fair funding must address these issues.

“Our budget is running on fumes”

Barnet's young people get the vote

BY ROSHNI RAY

►

Young people at Unitas Youth Zone Credit Unitas

The government announced in the summer that they would lower the voting age to 16 by 2029. This means that, for the first time, approximately 10,000 in Barnet 16 and 17-year-olds may have a say in the next general election.

Barnet Post visited Unitas Youth Zone in Edgware to find out what some of the borough's young people think about the new voting age.

For Laila, 16, the answer is complicated. "Some 16 and 17 year olds are more grown up than others," she said. "Personally for me, I feel like I'll be able to vote, because I'm more mature. But for some people, I don't think they should be able to vote depending on their age."

Still, she believes that most of her friends would be "equipped to vote" and are politically well-versed. She said youngsters would be more interested in voting if politicians spoke more directly to their age group. Jeremy Corbyn stands out for her: "He really speaks to young people and promises benefits for young people in our country, which is more likely to make people vote for him."

“MPs should visit schools to talk to us”

our community, helping with litter, environmental causes as well."

For others, like Hala, 13, political engagement is still a work in progress. When asked what she would want to change if she had a say in politics, she said: "Edgware isn't a safe place. People getting stabbed, taken advantage of, people's phones get stolen... I don't think the whole of the UK is safe actually."

The recurring concern among many is that 16 and 17 year olds might not know enough about local politics to make their vote count, if they vote at all. Older voices echoed the need for more outreach and education.

Matilda, 24, believes voting at 16 could "give them the motivation to learn about politics more," while her friend Josie, 21, agreed that it would give young people "the chance to express their opinions."

Blanca R. Fernandez, sessional youth worker for arts and crafts at Unitas Youth Zone, sees another gap that goes beyond the proposed voting age. She stressed the lack of services for people with special needs over 25. While she believes politics matters, she insists that "it's down to the people ultimately to do an-



anything, to build communities" and "push for intervention projects that bridge social gaps."

Across all these conversations, the problem of engagement keeps coming up. How can 16 and 17 year olds vote responsibly if they don't know who their representatives are? Whether it's creating more youth centres, improving safety, or bringing politics into education, the youth of Barnet agree that with the right to vote there must be the right kind of outreach.

"MPs should physically visit schools to make their presence known and talk to us. To get familiar with us so they can form a deeper connection and get to know us more and [we] vote for them in the future," says Laila.

FEATURES



The volunteers who offer compassion for bereaved families

Karen Baker from North London Hospice on the crucial role played by the charity's volunteers

I began my journey with North London Hospice just two months ago, and from the moment I arrived, I was struck by the warmth and generosity of spirit that fills this place.

What surprised me most was the number of volunteers who dedicate their time and energy to supporting the hospice – over 600 individuals and growing. Their presence is felt in every

corner of our organisation, from our 18 charity shops to reception desks, spiritual support, administration, patient care, and of course, the bereavement service.

This incredible network of volunteers reflects the deep compassion and kindness found within the communities of Enfield and Barnet. Every day, I have the privilege of working alongside

Our bereavement volunteers provide emotional support through dedicated sessions, tailored to individual needs

these remarkable individuals, and I am continually moved by their empathy, dedication, and quiet strength.

When you walk into the hospice, you're greeted not just with a smile, but with genuine warmth. Volunteers offer a kind word, a listening ear, and gentle support – often at moments when families need it most.

Their care begins at reception and extends into our inpatient unit, where volunteers sit with patients and families, offering companionship and even spiritual support.

For those who have lost a loved one, our bereavement volunteers provide emotional support through dedicated sessions, tailored to individual needs. As well as Enfield and Barnet, we are hoping to expand our cohort to include bereavement volunteers from Haringey in the upcoming months.

For those who prefer something else, we offer 'walk and talk' groups in local parks and from the hospice itself – again, led by volunteers. Our grief cafés, hosted by volunteers, offer a safe space to connect and share. We currently run one at Enfield Town Library and will be opening another at South Friern Library in Barnet later this month.

Support also extends into the home through our 'compassionate neighbours' programme, where volunteers visit families weekly to offer companionship and a caring presence. At our Winchmore Hill site, volunteers lead art and knitting groups, and we're considering emotional support groups at our Finchley premises, including 'continuing bonds' exercises.

Our volunteers are the heart of North London Hospice. They help families feel seen, heard, and supported – not just in moments of grief, but throughout their journey. The hospice provides the foundation, but it's our volunteers who build the framework of community care. Their kindness, empathy, and unwavering commitment make a profound difference every day.

What's truly inspiring is that while our volunteers already have dedicated roles, they're always willing to step in and support other areas when needed. One beautiful example is our upcoming Light up a Life event on 30th November. This event honours those we've lost, with a tree illuminated by over 1,000 lights, each one dedicated to a loved one.

Volunteers will be there offering hot drinks, handing out tea lights, and most importantly, providing comfort and a warm voice – even when the weather is cold and hearts are heavy. Their kindness and empathy never ends.

We're currently welcoming new volunteers so please get in touch if you are interested.

To get in touch:
Email nlhbereavement@northlondonhospice.co.uk

In depth discussion at Barnet's Philosophy Café



Comic relief as Philosophy Café returns to Barnet

Where deep thought meets belly laughs, cake and comedy's on the menu in Hampden Square, writes Andreas Koumi

Laughter echoed louder than the coffee machine at the second Philosophy Café, held at Paris-Brest Patisserie in Hampden Square, Southgate last month.

Titled "What's left to laugh about?", the event was expertly facilitated by humour-specialists Hephzi and Brian Kaplan from London Art Therapy Centre. They opened by explaining how laughter is good for mind, body and soul – and how humour, when used affectionately, can be a powerful tool for healing and connection.

Around 20 local residents of different ages and backgrounds attended. Splitting into two groups for fuller participation, they wrestled with conversation starters such as: "Against the assault of laughter, nothing can stand," "Life is far too important a thing ever to talk seriously about it," and "Comedy is simply a funny way of being serious".

Lively debate ensued, with plenty of punchlines thrown in for good measure. Between the mirth and merriment, serious insights emerged, and participants offered passionate feedback about the need for more opportunities to come together in such a unique way.

Enthusiased organiser, Mirella Issaias, said: "The Philosophy Café is thriving, attracting a diverse crowd and filling a hunger for meaningful connections. I have a real passion for bringing people together, blending perspectives like colours on a palette, to create something new and vibrant. We are at a time in society where speaking our truth feels unsafe, but our events provide a safe, non-judgemental and stimulating space."

Sadly, an application to the National Lottery to fund gatherings such as this – as part of the Mayor of London's Community Weekend 2025 – was unsuccessful. Evidently, encouraging people to think more (rather than just party more) wasn't deemed a priority. Still, you've got to laugh: a challenge participants embraced with gusto on the night.

Joking apart, the next Philosophy Café is planned for November. Thanks to *Barnet Post* for helping to promote this venture.

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FEATURES

Growing in the community

A bumper summer crop of pumpkins, tomatoes, cucumbers and other produce is another illustration of the continuing success of GROW, the school and community farm which has been created on a six-acre field next to The Totteridge Academy in Barnet Lane.

Visitors were welcomed to an open day this summer by the farm’s managing director Lucy Hollis.

There was nothing but praise for the way this educational charity has encouraged pupils at The Totteridge Academy to get involved in the planting and growing of vegetables, fruit and flowers.

Some of the produce from the farm goes straight to the school kitchen for seasonal meals for pupils and surplus is sold at a farm shop at the school entrance.

GROW’s contribution to the community has expanded since it opened in 2019 with the introduction of raised-bed gardens for use by families who have no outdoor space, and through the organisation of regular gardening clubs for children on Saturdays and in school holidays.

GROW’s aim is to gain security of tenure of its site with a ten-year lease and ensure community support for any future planning applications.

The open day marked the start of a month-long consultation to test public support for the farm and to gain approval for a lease agreement with United Learning Trust (on behalf of Totteridge Academy) and the Department of Education.

For Rob and Yvonne Verrill the chance to be shown around the farm brought back family memories.

“Our son went to The Totteridge Academy, and it is great to see how the school is now offering local children the chance to learn how to cultivate and grow food.

“It is so beneficial to get children involved in out-of-doors activities. It is great for their self-esteem.”

Another first-time visitor Nick Gagen was shown the raised beds where families without gardens can grow produce.

“I live in Manor Road and have walked past the farm lots of times but never been inside. It’s great to see what GROW does for the school and local community.”

For farm manager Chris Haigh the tomato crop has exceeded expectations with lots of varieties doing well – heritage tomatoes, Roma, gourmand and gardener’s delight.

He says that securing a long lease on their field – which was previously unused by the school – would assist in planning future cultivation and make it worthwhile to plant more fruit trees



The Barnet Society’s Nick Jones

on the ongoing success of a farm

at a Totteridge school

such as apple, pear, quince, plum and mulberry.

GROW has already planted over 60 fruit trees and around 500 hedgerow trees around the perimeter of the farm.

Anna Robins – chair of the Byng Road Allotment Committee – explains the increasing role of GROW in the local community following its launch in 2019: “By far the main beneficiary of GROW is the academy itself. The initiative’s biggest achievement is connecting the school kitchen to GROW’s food to create seasonal dishes for pupils and staff. Pupils can see the journey of their food from field to fork.

Over the past six years, GROW has provided food for over 100,000 school lunch plates for the Totteridge Academy community.

“Also, GROW’s aim is to integrate itself with the entire school curriculum and to apply the subject knowledge on the farm. While some subjects are easily applied to the GROW farm, like science and the recently revived food technology, GROW’s challenge is to support all subjects across the curriculum so all pupils can access and learn from GROW. Other subjects that have used the GROW farm are photography, English, and geography – most of which were re-introduced to

▲
GROW’s managing director Lucy Hollis (right) welcomes visitors during the farm’s open day
Credit
Nick Jones

“
It is so beneficial to get children involved in out of doors activities
”

the academy’s curriculum due to its academic success.

“The local community can access GROW: by a community stall in the academy’s car park, where fresh food is affordable and accessible for all (Wednesday 3pm–6pm; from November 3pm–5pm); Grow-Cook-Share which provides local families with no outdoor space with a raised bed to grow fruit and vegetables; and BUNCH, an AQA qualification in floristry for people aged between 13–16 years old.

“GROW also provides after-school programmes and holiday clubs for free school meal recipients.

“In the last few years GROW has spread its initiative across Barnet. “They are working with Underhill School and Children’s Centre and Whittings Hill Primary School by supporting them to set up their own farms to help their communities access fresh food and enhance their wellbeing through farming.

“Grahame Park now has its own community garden welcoming local residents to grow food, learn new skills, and connect with their neighbours. It is a thriving hub with over 550 visitors joining the community garden.

“Residents can also access GROW by volunteering to help grow food and flowers, learn how to farm their own food as well as help with their mental health. It is available to anyone over the age of 16 years old and takes place on Wednesday morning from 10am–4pm. Wellies, waterproofs, gloves, and tools are also available for volunteers to use. If that is not enticing enough GROW also provides a vegan lunch made from GROW farm produce and offers a 20% discount at their community stall.

“Adults who need additional support are not forgotten either. They are invited to volunteer at GROW Friday from 10am to 1pm. Volunteers will work in a group of no more than five adults and will get involved in a range of activities that best suit their individual needs and interests.

“Since January 2025, GROW has sown over 25,000 seeds – 1,200 pumpkins, 5,000 leeks and 450 tomatoes and are on target to sow a total of 64,500 seeds by the end of August. It has sold a half a tonne of food to the community, had 153 people participate in their various programmes and had another 48 volunteers join GROW.”

For further information, please visit their website: wearegrow.org. Or if you have any questions or would like to volunteer at GROW please contact: hello@wearegrow.org

The full version of the article appears at: barnetsociety.org.uk/campaign-underway-to-secure-long-term-future-for-highly-successful-on-site-school-farm-at-totteridge-academy/

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FEATURES



David 'Malandro' Onuma (right) in action at North 12
Credit: Anna Mahtani

Finchley jiu-jitsu coach wins gold

Anna Mahtani talks to David 'Malandro' Onuma about his success at the IBJJF World Master Championship

A martial arts instructor from Finchley has won gold in an international jiu-jitsu championship. Medal-winner David 'Malandro' Onuma, 57, is the founder of North 12 academy on the High Road in North Finchley. "In terms of my age and my category? Winning the World Masters is the highest thing you can do," he explains. "It was amazing." Taking place in August, the IBJJF World Master jiu-jitsu Championship is an annual international competition held in Las Vegas.

Competing in the medium-heavy category, David underwent multiple rounds of combat before defeating the reigning champion. "As soon as I step on the mat, the nerves completely go," he says. "I'm almost like a machine. I know what they're doing. I know what I'm doing. I see everything." Originally developed in Brazil in 1925 after a wave of Japanese immigration, Brazilian jiu-jitsu was only introduced to Britain in the 1990s. Over the past five years, it has been gaining in popularity in the UK. Inspired by Japanese judo,

this martial art focuses on submission fighting and ground-based training, known as "rolling". "It's not just the style, it's about the culture that goes with it," David explains. Be it by improving confidence, wellbeing, mental health, or discipline, jiu-jitsu is an inclusive sport. With over 40 years of training, multiple championships, and seven different black belts to his name, David has dedicated his life to martial arts. Because of his well-rounded combat style, a coach nicknamed him 'Malandro', the Por-

tuguese word for cunning. He has worn it proudly ever since. Hoping to spread the sports that raised him, David created North 12 in 2018. Operating six days a week, with 32 classes across a range of martial arts, the academy hosts lessons in multiple martial arts, with a woman's only option available. Around 450 members train in the purpose-built dojo, with ages ranging from four to 65. "I want to give people the knowledge that they can become better versions of themselves," David says. "Better martial artists. Better human beings." His teaching style is gentle yet disciplined, with David cracking jokes and demonstrating technique while his students watch with rapt attention. Overall, David has competed in the World Master Championship four times. Returning this year after a ten-year break from the competition, he knew he had to win. In the lead up to his competition, he trained for an extra two hours every day and paid special attention preparing his strategy. "It's almost like studying for an exam," he explains. During the competition, members of the academy stayed up late to live-stream his fights despite the eight-hour time difference. Returning from the US, David was surprised by his students with a celebration for his victory. "If I'm honest, the thing that I'm most proud of is that martial arts has helped actually build a community here." "Everybody was rooting for me, and it was nice to not let them down," he grins. Always striving for more, David is already eyeing up two more competitions before the year ends.

To sign up for classes at North 12: Visit nth12.com/enquiries



Singing or painting to brighten your day

Valerie Cowan on Memory Lane Singing Club and Finchley Art Society

If you're looking for new activities to brighten your day, I highly recommend singing and/or painting for being therapeutic, sociable and good fun. I have been a member of both the Memory Lane Singing Club and Finchley Art Society for over 20 years. Both are based in Finchley Central at St Mary's Parish Hall, Hendon Lane. These activities are an integral part of my life and have been beneficial in so many ways. Each offers creativity, friendship and a sense of belonging. Not only that, you develop skills that are very rewarding. Even medical professionals recognise their health and wellbeing benefits. We welcome new members at any time.

Please check the websites for full details: memorylanesingingclub.co.uk and finchleyartsociety.co.uk or email Valerie at v.cowan@hotmail.co.uk

Creative communities in Barnet libraries

BY CATHERINE LUSTED

Creative Communities is a council initiative, led by the library service to deliver a programme of events, activities and experiences for local residents. A wide range of exciting events are being planned and delivered for children, teens and adults. The new programme for October to December is out now. Highlights include an open mic poetry night with Michael Rosen and a talk on the history of Hendon Aerodrome. For older adults and their carers, art workshops and exercise sessions take place at Chipping Barnet and Colindale libraries as part of the Loving Life programme. There are also events for Black History Month, including Gathering Voices, a creative writing workshop celebrating the voices, stories and legacy of older Black residents in Barnet and a DJ workshop for children featuring Afrobeats. There's plenty of fun in half term for children, including Halloween crafts and a theatre show. For the latest updates on Creative Communities and information about events and activities across Barnet Libraries, sign up for the library newsletters or pick up a Creative Communities booklet from your local library. Visit barnet.gov.uk/librarynewsletters

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ARTS & CULTURE

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Left-right: Clive Greenwood as King Charles III and Silas Hawkins as Max Moore



Left-right: Abi Haberfield as political adviser Samantha, and Miranda Colmans as Leader of the Opposition Pam Jones



Making England great again?

Madison Yarbrough on a theatrical warning of political dangers ahead

Make England Great Again or *MEGA*, is the new play coming to Upstairs at the Gatehouse in Highgate Village. It's a comedy which showcases the rise of fascism around the globe and asks audiences the question: what if Britain's next?

Playwright Francis Beckett, whose knowledge and experience with fascism surpasses many, spoke with me about the themes of the play, as well as its creation and positioning in today's climate.

Max Moore, the leader of a fictional right-wing populist party, is the centerpiece of the play. Partly based on Boris Johnson, Nigel Farage, Donald Trump and even Beckett's own father, the playwright sees Moore as a dangerous threat, reflective of the current political extremism, who imperils the stability of the British government.

On the subject, Beckett said: "I have no doubt in saying that the nearest we have come to fascism since the Second World War is the Trump presidency and the growing threat from the far right in Britain."

I asked Beckett what audiences are meant to consider when coming into this play. He told me that everything in his piece focuses on what goes on at the top of government, rather than the day-to-day management of the country. He's focused on parliament and the King. Max Moore sets out to ruin all competing spaces of power, as fascists do, similar to Donad Trump, according to Beckett.

"If you destroy all those checks and balances, you cease to be a democratic nation. You've become a dictatorship. So that's what Donald Trump is doing."

Beckett wants his viewers to ask themselves, "would it be possible... to subvert the British constitution, in the way that Donald Trump is subverting the American constitution?"

Beckett explained to me the concept of Britain's unwritten constitution – which means there is lack of clear laws about who has power over what – and questioned the widely held belief that something like what has gone on in France, Germany or America could never happen in Britain. His answer: "that's complete garbage".

Beckett and his play are strictly focused on the likelihood of a far-right campaign taking over Britain in the way it has done in America.



Francis Beckett, writer of 'Make England Great Again'

On his experience with fascism, Beckett looks to his father, "an old fascist". According to Beckett, his father "ran all the propaganda for Oswald Mosley's British Union of Fascists before the Second World War."

Beckett has researched and published a book about his father's life, titled *Fascist in the Family*. Beyond his father's involvement, he is not unfamiliar to politics himself, as a former president of the National Union of Journalists, he has worked on

national newspapers and magazines. He also has worked for trade unions and the Labour Party.

When I asked Beckett what his audience should be thinking about when they walk out of his play, he simply said: "How can we prevent it?" He suggests there are ways, and history has proved it. He wants audiences to look at this proceeding of happenings before them in the play and give serious consideration to the future of Britain.

For Beckett, there is a certain necessity in the viewing of this play. It highlights an obligation to ask ourselves: how important is freedom? How strong is one's impulse to reject dictatorship and fascism at a time we are confronted with it everyday? Beckett promises to ask and answer these questions in *Make England Great Again*.

Make England Great Again runs for two weeks, from 30th September to 5th October, and again from 14th–19th October, Tuesday–Saturday at 7.30 pm and Sunday at 4 pm. Tickets from www.upstairsatthegatehouse.com, phone 020 8340 3488

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EAST FINCHLEY

Cautious welcome for “once-in-a-generation” plans for The Railway Hotel

BY DAVID FLOYD

LOCAL RESIDENTS AND politicians have given a cautiously positive response to the announcement of a public consultation on plans to develop a historic Edgware pub.

The Railway Hotel on Station Road was built in 1931 and has Grade 2-listed status, however it closed as a pub in 2006 and has since suffered vandalism and fire damage.

Now Edgware Limited, which describes itself as “a special purpose vehicle (SPV) created and managed by local developers and investors” has opened a consultation on plans for the Railway Hotel and the “Forumside” to the rear of the derelict pub.

Its proposals include plans for “around 750 new homes, sustainably located close to Edgware tube station” and “approximately 2,000sqm of new high quality commercial ground floor units plus 650sqm of the renovated Railway Hotel”.

In a statement announcing the initial consultation, which took place last month, a spokesperson

The Railway Hotel in Edgware
Credit Mark Amies



for Edgware Limited said: “This is a once-in-a-generation opportunity to bring The Railway Hotel back into public use and deliver meaningful regeneration for Edgware.”

Local resident and writer Mark Amies, who has campaigned for the pub to be restored, welcomed the news in a post on his blog last month. He said: “This saga has gone on for years, whilst the building has sat in a semi-derelict, fire damaged and vandalised state. There have been times when I felt like giving up all hope of anything being done to save it.

He added: “It is only fair that the proposals are given a fair hearing. I want to see the building put back into use, I want to see it restored, so if this is the only option, then as long as it is not going to be shockingly bad or put the building at risk, I think I have to accept it.”

Also responding to the consultation announcement, the Conservative councillors for Edgware Shuey Gordon, Nick Mearing-Smith and Lucy Wakeley told *Barnet Post*: “We are pleased to see that after many years of neglect, The Railway Hotel site is finally being looked at seriously for redevelopment. Local people have been clear about how strongly they feel about the building being left in its previous state, and since being elected as your local councillors we have been working with the council to find a way forward for this important site.”

They added: “We will continue to stand up for residents and ensure their views are at the heart of the planning process as plans are brought forward.”

For information on the proposals:
Visit edgware-railwayhotel.co.uk

FINCHLEY CENTRAL

Work on controversial bus lane “paused”

BY REBECCA PATTONI

BARNET COUNCIL HAS “paused” a bus lane in Finchley following protests from local residents and politicians.

The implementation of the scheme in Regents Park Road, which the council had decided to make permanent in January this year, provoked over 350 local people to join a WhatsApp group to discuss their opposition.

While the council explains the scheme was introduced to “improve bus journey times for 13, 125, 221 and 460 bus routes”, which aligns with Barnet Council’s long term transport strategy to create a “Net Zero borough by 2042” many residents were concerned about the potential safety and congestion issues the lane was causing.

Finchley Church End Conservative councillors Jennifer Grocock and Josh Mastin-Lee told *Barnet Post* that local residents were having

“great difficulties” accessing side roads and added that for “people who aren’t local, they’re not sure whether it’s live or not.”

They claimed the scheme was part of an “active campaign to make driving as painful, expensive and difficult as possible”.

The councillors added that they had concerns about the quality of the consultation carried out by the council and said that, based on a consultation they had carried out, they believed residents wanted “the whole scheme removed back to normal”.

Finchley and Golders Green MP Sarah Sackman was also approached by residents seeking to have the bus lane removed.

Asked about her involvement, she told *Barnet Post*: “My caseworkers met with residents immediately to see first-hand the issues they were raising. They told me of the problems caused by narrow lanes and gaps between parked cars and

traffic islands.

“My team and I acted on their concerns. I demanded that the council reexamine the safety of these measures and review the case for these works. With the efforts of campaigners, councillors and my office we have achieved progress by pausing the second phase of works and securing a review into the initial works.”

As a result of this pressure, Barnet Council has now decided to review the scheme. A spokesperson said: “Following feedback from residents, work has been paused on the new bus lane on Regents Park Road while we undertake a full review. The review will be holistic, covering all parts of the project including but not limited to safety, line markings, and parking spaces.

“Once all the information of the review is collected it will be assessed by Barnet Council and TfL officers, and the outcome shared with residents.”

NORTH FINCHLEY

Developer’s rival bid for Tally Ho site

BY GRACE HOWARTH,
LOCAL DEMOCRACY
REPORTER

MORE THAN 100 NEW homes could be built in North Finchley, rivaling plans from a competing developer.

Plans have been submitted to Barnet Council by Sanprine Ltd, for the construction of a 16-storey residential building containing 106 flats, retail and community space.

The site, Balfour House, is bounded by Ballards Lane and sits within North Finchley town centre and in an area referred to in the adopted Barnet Local Plan as ‘Tally Ho Triangle’.

The existing building, which Sanprine owns and is set to be demolished subject to planning approval, is four storeys in height and

used for retail and office purposes. However, it currently experiences “high vacancy rates”.

Tally Ho Triangle is allocated for residential-led redevelopment and most recently an outline planning application was submitted by Regal JP for the redevelopment of a number of sites within the town centre including Balfour House.

Regal JP’s application includes several buildings with heights up to 21 storeys comprising up to 855 homes alongside new retail, commercial and community spaces however Sanprine noted Regal JP’s application “has not yet been determined by LBB [Barnet Council]”.

Sanprine’s proposed development will include the delivery of 35% affordable homes, comprising 60% social rent and 40% intermediate, in line with the council’s local plan requirements.

The development is car-free with the exception of four disabled parking spaces as well as 204 cycle parking spaces.

The housing mix consists of 54 one-bedroom flats, 15 of which are allocated affordable, 47 two bedroom flats, 18 of which will be marketed as affordable, and five three-bedroom flats, all of which will be social-rent.

More information on the scheme can be found via Barnet Council’s planning portal, using reference number 25/3287/FUL.

CGI of design Credit Tate Hindle



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Licensing Act 2003

Notice of Application for a Premises Licence

Notice is hereby given that **Shane Human, on behalf of O'Donnell Moonshine Ltd** have applied to the Licensing Authority of London Borough of Barnet for a Premises Licence to permit:

- **Retail Sale of Alcohol for off-site consumption during the hours of Monday to Saturday, 10:00–21:00 and Sundays, 11:00–18:00. Small free samples will also be provided to try before purchase**
- **For the premises: O'Donnell Moonshine Kiosk 22 situated at Kiosk 22 Upper Mall, Brent Cross Shopping Centre, Prince Charles Drive NW4 3FP**

A register of licensing applications can be inspected by contacting Licensing Team at licensing@haringey.gov.uk

Any person wishing to submit relevant representations concerning this application must give notice in writing to licensing@haringey.gov.uk, giving in detail the grounds of the representation no later than: **14/10/2025**

Copies of all valid representations must include your name and address and will be included in the papers presented to the Licensing Authorities Sub Committee, these will therefore pass into the public domain.

Representations must relate to one or more of the four Licensing Objectives: the prevention of crime and disorder, public safety, the prevention of public nuisance and the protection of children from harm. It is an offence liable on conviction to a fine up to level 5 under section 158 of the Licensing Act 2003 knowingly or recklessly to make a false statement in connection with an application.

Dated: 17th day of September 2025

SPORT



Mixed bag for Bees after welcome wins on the road

BY NICK SANDAMAS

Since my last update on the Bees, it has been a bit of a mixed bag of results. Home form has been an ongoing concern whilst performances on the road have been the complete opposite. There was joy at the County Ground, Swindon where Barnet

racked up their first league win since returning to the EFL, with two late goals from new signings Emanuel Osadebe and Dennis Adeniran securing a 2-0 win over the Wiltshire side. That was followed by another win on the road, Ollie Hawkins' goal on the hour mark securing a single goal success against Cheltenham despite losing Osadebe

to a red card. The following week saw Danny Collinge strike a late goal to secure a home point against Colchester. Next came a trip to League One Luton Town in the Vertu Trophy: a night to forget as the Hatters put in a dominant performance to win 4-1. They raced into a three-goal half-time lead, adding a fourth late on with an Adam Senior strike a mere consolation for the Bees. Winless Shrewsbury were next up and, despite Barnet taking an early lead through Mark Shelton, the Shrews struck three times before half time to lead 3-1 and that was how it stayed. Assistant boss Connor Smith described the performance afterwards as the worst he'd seen from a Bees team. However, the team responded the following week with a 2-1 win on the road at Crewe to maintain their good recent away run. Keeper Ciaran Slicker was the hero with two penalty saves when the score was 1-1. Lee Ndlovu equalised within minutes of going behind. Ryan Glover scored the winner with ten minutes to go. The Bees followed this win by finally breaking their home duck with a clean sheet and three points against Grimsby Town. October sees Accrington Stanley, Notts County, Cambridge United (in the Vertu Trophy) visit The Hive along with long journeys to Tranmere (who the Bees will meet for the first time) and Barrow (who they encounter for the first time in the league). As we went to press, Barnet were in a midtable spot after nine games played. Based on the results so far, we're playing far better away from home. Hopefully by the time you read this, we will have achieved a few more home wins to add to our impressive away form.

Mill Hill Village Cricket Club makes history with five promotions in dream season

BY DAVID HICKEY

Mill Hill Village Cricket Club is toasting an unforgettable 2025 season after all five adult league teams secured promotion – a feat unmatched in living memory. Leading the charge for the club's Saturday league sides, the 1st XI claimed the Herts Premier Cricket League's Division 4B title and will step up to Division 4A next summer. It marks back-to-back promotions for captain Devraj Ray's side, which he says has been powered by hard work, sharp habits, and a team spirit that is second to none. The 2nd XI, under new skipper Hamdard Jan Temori, finished just two points shy of Potters Bar CC 3rd XI at the top of Division 7 East. Meanwhile, the 3rd XI, led by Pryank Patel, sealed promotion with a decisive final-day win over Northwood CC 4th XI. They ended the campaign second

in Division 11 West. The 4th XI, captained by Ken Shakoor, also grabbed second place and promotion from Division 12 East. And in a milestone moment, the club entered a Sunday league side for the first time. Captain H Ikram's team secured promotion from Division 5 in second place – boasting the league's highest net run rate of 2.03. A Mill Hill Village Cricket Club spokesperson said: "Five promotions in a single season is an extraordinary achievement and something everyone at the club can be proud of. From the 1st XI winning their division to the brilliant efforts across all our Saturday sides and our new Sunday league XI, it shows the depth, commitment and spirit within Mill Hill Village. It truly feels like a golden era for the club." The club intends to build on its success by entering a 5th XI into the Herts Premier Cricket League in 2026.



Licensing Act 2003
Notice of Application for Variation of a Premises Licence

Notice is hereby given that **Nine Food Group Limited** have applied to the Licensing Authority of London Borough of Barnet for a Variation of a Premises Licence to permit:

- Late night refreshments Monday to Sunday, 00:00–03:00
- For the premises: Pizza Hut situated at 128 Ballards Lane Finchley, London N3 2PA

A register of licensing applications can be inspected by contacting Licensing Team at licensing@haringey.gov.uk

Any person wishing to submit relevant representations concerning this application must give notice in writing to licensing@haringey.gov.uk, giving in detail the grounds of the representation no later than: **14/10/2025**

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Dated: 17th day of September 2025 Signed: Divneet Khara

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- For the premises: Pizza Hut situated at 18 North End Road, London NW11 7PH

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