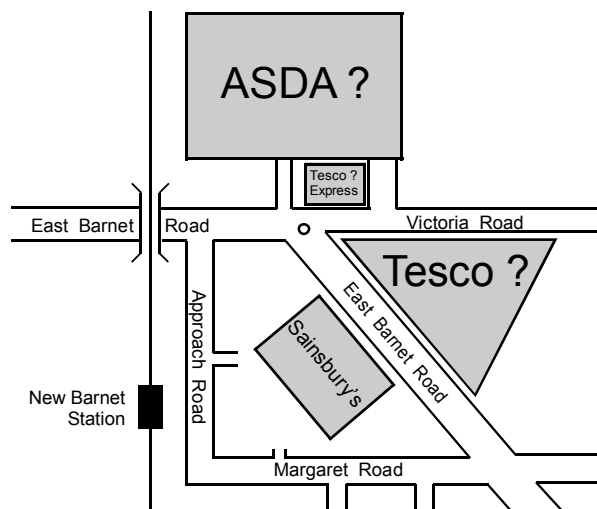


Save New Barnet

Newsletter

19th July 2010



Dear Friends,

Welcome to another roundup of news from the Save New Barnet Campaign.

Traffic Lights – East Barnet Road / Margaret Road Junction

You may recall that in Spring 2008 there was a proposal from Barnet Council to remove the traffic lights at the junction of East Barnet Road and Margaret Road to save the cost of maintenance

Transport for London (TfL) have recently published a list of 145 traffic lights across London that they intend to remove in order to “smooth the traffic flow”. The EBR/MR junction is included on this list.

A report (<http://tinyurl.com/tflebrmr>) and appendix (<http://tinyurl.com/tflebrmra>) attempts to make a case for the removal of the traffic lights. It is clear that someone who has never visited the junction has written the report. It claims that there is nothing in the vicinity that would generate pedestrian journeys – what about St Margaret’s Nursery, New Barnet Station, Sainsbury’s supermarket, “town centre” shops, three places of worship, and two public car parks? The JCoSS traffic does not appear to have been included with the traffic count.

The report states that analysis of the junction does not take account of the effect on pedestrians yet goes on to note that safety concerns could be caused if the lights were switched off.

The only reason for removal seems to be speeding up the traffic along East Barnet Road, but the calculated increase is miniscule at most times and worse in the morning peak. Removal would make it difficult for vehicles to emerge from both arms of Margaret Road, particularly as most are turning right across each other’s paths. This was presumably the reason the lights were installed in the first place.

If you think the removal of these traffic lights and pedestrian crossings is a bad idea, please write to Kulveer Ranger, the Mayor of London’s transport advisor kulveer.ranger@london.gov.uk
You could also send a copy to your local councillors (contact details at end of this newsletter).

JCoSS Public Meeting

A public meeting was held on Thursday 27th May to discuss JCoSS. Chair of Governors Mike Grabiner and Public Relations Advisor Ben Rich were present to hear the views of local residents who packed the Community Centre. Also present were local councillors and Theresa Villiers MP.

Despite promises to keep the local community informed and involved when planning permission was granted in summer 2007, this was the first public meeting to be held. It was organised by the New Barnet Community Association (NBCA) when it appeared that nothing was happening to involve local residents in the school travel plan – the main issue at the planning stage.

There were some very angry exchanges, especially from residents of Westbrook and Armstrong Crescents who have been severely inconvenienced by construction worker’s vehicles blocking the road. Since the meeting the situation has not improved, and some consider it may have become worse. It appears that work on the site is continuing outside the agreed hours, including Sundays. Due to the lack of action many residents have given up complaining. This unfortunately allows the contractors to say “nobody has complained” and therefore there is no problem. We suggest registering a complaint over every single incident.

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The main contact is Ben Rich (ben@benrich.co.uk) 07713 509 134, but Cllr Robert Rams has stated that he wants to hear about any problems (see below for his contact details). We therefore suggest contacting both Ben Rich AND Cllr Robert Rams so that any issues can be addressed.

At the meeting promises were made by JCoSS to involve the community more through further public meetings and invitations to open days.

Residents in the Westbrook Crescent area recently received a letter from Cllr Robert Rams inviting them to a liaison committee that he is setting up "on behalf of the local community". This meeting is being held at 6pm on 20th July, but only those who respond to the invitation will be told the location. It should be noted that Cllr Robert Rams is also a governor of JCoSS but this is not stated anywhere on the letter. It is not clear who he is representing – the council, the local residents, or the school? It is worrying that "public consultation" (presumably needed by JCoSS to fulfil their Travel Plan obligations) is being carried out behind closed doors.

NBCA has been put under pressure to attend the meeting, but has been unable to get any answers to questions it has raised about the purpose of the meeting, the agenda, the failure to comply with the original planning permission and the obvious difficulties that have arisen with the contractor's traffic. It is feared that these traffic problems will be replicated once parents start bringing their children to the school.

Secrecy over the venue and a lack of clarity over who is calling the meeting is a cause for concern.

"New Barnet Town Centre Framework"

We understand that "Option 1" received overwhelming support from the public and local politicians. Barnet's planners are now working to further develop this plan for publication in the autumn. Option 1 features a consolidated and enhanced shopping area but no additional superstores.

Local Development Framework (LDF)

Despite being "rubber stamped" at Barnet Council's scrutiny committee in late May, a few days later the whole document was withdrawn. A new version of the LDF is expected in the autumn. Across the country, 43 LDFs have been withdrawn by local authorities to take account of the new government's priorities and "localism" agenda.

Asda

We understand that Asda are proposing to get on with the cleanup and decontamination of the gasworks as early as this summer. Providing this is done safely and to a high standard, this is welcome news. Whoever eventually develops this large site near the heart of New Barnet would have to carry out this work and Asda may find it more saleable to other developers in a 'clean' state. Unlike Tesco, it should be remembered that Asda actually own their entire development site.

You will recall that we commissioned architects to draw up alternative plans for the former Gasworks site last year. These featured family housing, a swimming pool / leisure centre and a limited amount of retail based on the "Vision for New Barnet" compiled by local residents. Details of both are still on our website. Asda will be aware that our proposals fit perfectly with the new Government's "localism" agenda.

Tesco

Despite trying to make contact, we have heard nothing from Tesco about their major development proposals for months. At a recent Chipping Barnet Residents Forum a planning officer stated that the council were planning to serve a "Section 215" improvement notice over the state of the Tesco owned properties at 7-11 Victoria Road and 15 East Barnet Road. In recent weeks the frontage of the OpTex Building in Victoria Road (owned by Tesco) has been tidied up. This property had been abandoned since hosting Tesco's flashy public exhibition two years ago.

Sadly the threat of Tesco looming over New Barnet continues to be felt as planning blight. The shops on one side of East Barnet Road slowly fall vacant, and others become run down, as small business owners don't wish to invest in properties that could be demolished.

Yet another Tesco Express will open in August on the site of the former furniture shop opposite the Odeon. This chain continues to grow at an enormous rate, often at the cost of small independent businesses. Who knows where they will appear next? Look out for larger units, double fronted or extended at the rear, which fall vacant and before you can blink another Tesco Express may have appeared.

Store Watch

One of the strongest reasons against an additional superstore in New Barnet is that there is already an abundance of grocery retail provision in the area. For this reason, we keep a tally of supermarkets and convenience stores surrounding New Barnet. Small stores pop up and disappear quite regularly, so do let us know if you spot any new shops or others that have closed (our contact details are at the bottom of this email). Store locations are plotted on this map: <http://tinyurl.com/nbstores>

Swimming Pool?

The Danegrove School playing field at the junction of Cat Hill and Park Road has lain unused by the school for many years. We understand that there are proposals to develop a swimming pool and community hall/ cafe on part of the site. A consultation exercise was due to have been carried out by Barnet Council but nobody seems to have heard anything.

A new small pool in this location could have implications for the future of Church Farm Pool, which many users complain is in a very poor state of repair. There are also concerns about where vehicles would access the site, close to an already busy junction.

93 - 95 Crescent Road

A planning application (B/02522/10) for 2 new blocks containing 4 one bed flats and 3 two bed flats on land adjoining and to the rear of 93 & 95 Crescent Road has been submitted to the council. Details can be found here: <http://tinyurl.com/9395cr>

An application for the construction of a 4 bedroom detached house on the site was approved in November 2007 but was not built. Since then there have been 2 applications for blocks of flats, which have both been refused. If you wish to comment on the current application please contact the planning department.

Chipping Barnet Residents Forum

The forum is a public meeting where residents in the north of the Borough can ask questions about the work of Barnet Council to a panel of councillors and officers. The next meeting will be held at 6.30 pm on Tuesday 20th July, at Chipping Barnet Library, Stapylton Road, Barnet, EN5 4QT.

These meetings can at times be very frustrating, but they are a way of extracting nuggets of information about what the council is up to, in a public forum. An answer at the last forum revealed that the planning officers had been talking to the "major stakeholders" over the potential developments in New Barnet. When repeatedly pushed for clarity about this phrase the planning officer admitted that the "major stakeholders" were the landowners (Tesco & Asda). Yet again the local residents, who would have to live with the effect of the developments, are shown to be very low down on the list of priorities.

Questions can be submitted in advance to the forum administrator Pauline Bagley 020 8359 2023 pauline.bagley@barnet.gov.uk

Newsletter

Do pass this newsletter on to friends and neighbours. If you have received this newsletter 'second hand', please sign up to receive your own copy by email on our website. Copies of our previous newsletters are still available from www.newbarnet.org.uk/documents/publicity

Thank you for your continued support

Regards,
Save New Barnet Campaign Team

Contacting Your Local Councillors

Maps showing the boundaries of the three wards covering New Barnet are on our website:
www.newbarnet.org.uk/action/councillors

East Barnet Ward

Cllr Barry Evangelini (Conservative) cldr.b.evangelini@barnet.gov.uk
Conservative Group Members Room, Hendon Town Hall, The Burroughs, Hendon, London, NW4 4BG

Cllr Robert Rams (Conservative) cldr.r.rams@barnet.gov.uk
6 Delroy Court, Franklin Close, Whetstone, London, N20 9QT 020 8446 7291

Cllr Joanna Tambourides (Conservative) cldr.j.tambourides@barnet.gov.uk
47 Hampden Way, Southgate, London, N14 5DJ 020 8361 9154

High Barnet Ward

Cllr Bridget Perry (Conservative) cldr.b.perry@barnet.gov.uk
89 Sebright Road, Barnet, EN5 4HP 020 8441 5683

Cllr Wendy Prentice (Conservative) cldr.w.prentice@barnet.gov.uk
34 Hadley Highstone, Barnet, EN5 4PU 020 8364 9249

Cllr David Longstaff (Conservative) cldr.d.longstaff@barnet.gov.uk
66 Hatley Close, Friern Barnet, London, N11 3LN

Oakleigh Ward

Cllr Sachin Rajput (Conservative) cldr.s.rajput@barnet.gov.uk
63 Longmore Avenue, New Barnet, EN5 1LA 020 8449 3610

Cllr Brian Salinger (Conservative) cldr.b.salinger@barnet.gov.uk
32 The Ridgeway, Friern Barnet, London, N11 3LJ 020 8368 1329 07956 337 878

Cllr Stephen Sowerby (Conservative) cldr.s.sowerby@barnet.gov.uk
Flat 11, 79 Holden Road, Woodside Park, London N12 7DP 0777 0687778

Save New Barnet Campaign

website: www.newbarnet.org.uk
email: info@newbarnet.org.uk
post: % The Community Centre, 48/50 Victoria Road, New Barnet, EN4 9PF

Save New Barnet Campaign is a non-political group of local residents fighting for a better New Barnet. The group seeks to inform the local community about potential changes to the area, and oppose inappropriate developments. The group aims to promote a clear vision for how New Barnet could be developed for the benefit of the community based on the views of local people. The campaign is funded entirely by donations from individuals. It is not bankrolled by any company or commercial organisation.