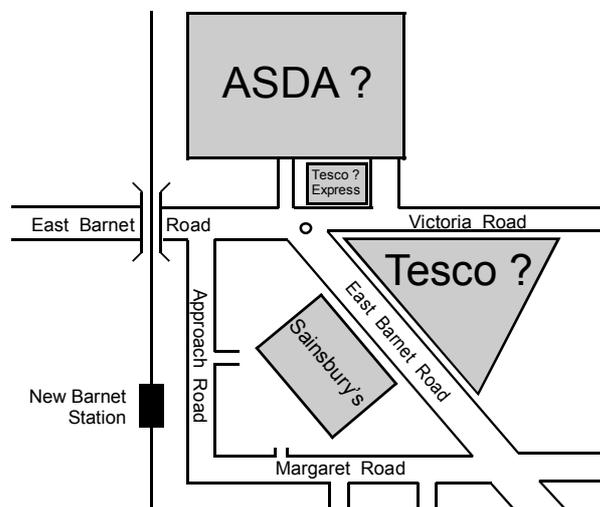


# Save New Barnet

## Newsletter

2nd April 2016



Friends, welcome to another Save New Barnet Campaign newsletter.

We have used a sketch map of the 'Tesco' & 'Asda' sites as a header illustration on our SNB newsletters since the campaign started back in 2008. But it is now time to retire the image as site ownership and developments move on.

### **'Newest Barnet' development in Victoria Road (3 former Tesco owned sites)**

This residential development of 31 homes by Tesco subsidiary Spen Hill is now owned by Meyer Homes. Work should be finished on the last building by the end of April. The first buyers have already moved in to the main 'Sambroke Square' site and we are hearing positive feedback. Good landscaping has been installed from day one, so the new development should settle into the community quickly. We welcome the incoming residents to New Barnet.

### **Albert Road Gasworks Site (Asda)**

This is the last time we will call the former New Barnet Gasworks 'the Asda site'. At the start of this year Asda sold the land to One Housing, a housing association with a large development programme. In future we will be referring to the site as 'Victoria Quarter' which is what both the Council's planners and One Housing now call it.

Members of the SNB team met with One Housing representatives this week and had a fruitful discussion. It is early days and they are still evaluating the existing full planning permission that was granted for development of 304 homes on the site in January 2015. However, they are looking at the site boundaries and adjoining properties to see how the new development relates to them. There will probably be some minor changes required to the existing permission to meet the circumstances they find, but it is their current intention to build the consented scheme.

Dealing with contamination on the site from its historic use to produce town gas has always been an issue. The group development director recognised that closely controlled remediation measures are critical from the point of view of relations with the community, to safeguard the watercourses and environment, and for the reassurance of future purchasers. They are working on this aspect and hope to start works in the late summer 2016 which would take about a year to complete. We will have further meetings with them to discuss what impact this could/will have on the community, and how problems can be minimised. Both One Housing and New Barnet Community Association (NBCA) will be seeking meetings with the council to discuss these serious matters.

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Traffic issues were also discussed but it is too early for ideas to emerge. Again meetings with both the developer and Barnet Council will be essential and critical to the success or failure of this development.

The rear portion of the gasworks site around the disused gasometer remains in use as a depot by the gas distribution company National Grid. We are aware that National Grid are seeking permission for works on this site, possibly involving the introduction of much larger vehicles, and are concerned in case it will have a negative impact on the new residential development, Victoria Recreation Ground, and on the wider community.

Overall it was a positive first meeting with One Housing and bodes well for the future.

## **Victoria Recreation Ground**

You will recall that last summer Barnet Council held an extensive consultation exercise to look at options to replace the existing pool at Church Farm which has reached the end of its life. Following public input, Victoria Recreation Ground emerged as the preferred location.

On Tuesday 29th March, at rather short notice, the Council held a consultation about their proposals for a swimming pool and leisure centre in the Rec. Two options were displayed, giving quite brief details. Both proposals show a two storey building on the site of the current tennis and basketball courts. This would house a 25m pool, a small learner pool, exercise studio, changing rooms, cafe & toilets. The tennis and basketball courts would be relocated to the north east corner of the Rec adjoining Lawton Road. The bowling green stays where it is. The main difference between the two options is the location of car parking and access routes. Their preferred car parking option is where the children's play area is currently located, with access from Lawton Road.

There were many questions which will require further detailed work from the designers before we will get any answers. Traffic volume and management will be a significant issue.

The proposals should be available on the Council's website 'soon'. Further consultation with more detailed plans showing the design of the building should take place within the next few months.

Generally there is, in principle, public support for the proposals although there are some who would prefer to see no building of any sort take place on the Rec and for it to be simply improved with better maintenance. This will not happen.

Over the next five years the Council has to make a further £82 million of savings (over and above the £75 million savings already made). An asset management review has been carried out which included looking at the future of all parks and open spaces in the borough. High quality parks such as Oak Hill Park, Victoria Park (Finchley) and Hendon Park will be improved and maintained to a high standard.

Unfortunately the Rec will be one of the casualties. From next year it will no longer be maintained at public expense. If damage occurs to fixtures and fittings they will be made safe by removing them. The grass will not be cut and will be allowed to revert to a natural meadow.

The site has been identified by the Council as suitable for investment.

One way to achieve this is to build the leisure centre which will be run by a specialist company. This way we get a swimming pool AND keep the majority of the open space which would be maintained as part of the overall contract.

The alternative is NO swimming pool in New Barnet, and the entire site sold for development. Any purchaser would have to keep a narrow green strip alongside the Shirebrook, as part of the Pymmes Brook Trail, plus a green strip alongside the new development on the gasworks site. The rest of the site could deliver many hundreds of flats & houses.

Some people refer to the Rec as 'Victoria Park' and hence believe it is somehow protected from development. It was originally farmland which was designated as the Victoria Recreation Ground from the earliest days of the growth of New Barnet. It is not in the Green Belt, nor is it Metropolitan Open Land or in a conservation area. As it has never been a 'park' it has no special protection.

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Once it ceases to be maintained as the Rec, it will become an unused large open space within 500 metres of a significant transport hub, thus meeting the government's criteria for a high density intensification housing site in suburbia. Barnet needs more large housing sites to meet the government's latest higher target for new housing.

While new housing is needed, we do not believe that the Rec should be used for this purpose.

This is why we are supporting the leisure centre scheme.

We want to make sure that any negative impact is minimised and that we create a positive gain for the community.

Now is the time to raise any concerns you may have while the proposal is still at the design stage. Once a contract is let and the leisure centre built and in use it will be too late. If you have any comments please let the planners know. Also contact your local councillors and the SNB team so we can work with you to get the best deal for New Barnet.

### **New Barnet Community Association AGM**

The Annual General Meeting of the NBCA takes place at 7.45pm on Friday 22nd April in the Community Centre, Victoria Road.

Following the short business meeting there will be a review of local planning developments along with an opportunity to discuss other local issues in New Barnet. Both Barnet Council and One Housing will have a representative present at this meeting to answer your questions. We look forward to seeing you then.

Regards,

Save New Barnet Campaign team

## **Save New Barnet Campaign**

website: [www.newbarnet.org.uk](http://www.newbarnet.org.uk)  
facebook: [www.facebook.com/groups/18590613740](https://www.facebook.com/groups/18590613740)  
twitter: [www.twitter.com/NewBarnet](https://www.twitter.com/NewBarnet)  
email: [info@newbarnet.org.uk](mailto: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.