

HIGHBURY COMMUNITY NEWS

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Finsbury Park residents take fight against Wireless Festival to court

- Up to 150,000 people to attend three day concert on 8-10 July

By CHARLIE ROBERSON

The Friends of Finsbury Park, supported by local residents and other community groups, has taken its battle against Haringey Council and Wireless Festival to court. The hearing was called for after the Council approved the use of a large area of Finsbury Park for the music festival due to take place on 8-10 July.

The hearing took place on June 9th at the Royal Courts of Justice. The Judge, Mr Justice Supperstone, granted permission for judicial review on all grounds but then dismissed the claim for reasons that he is to provide in his judgment, due to follow.

The Friends of Finsbury Park do not support this verdict. They believe it sets a dangerous precedent of the Council giving over large stretches of the park for commercial use, damaging the site itself and inconveniencing the people who enjoy it regularly. This is an especially important issue at a time when overcrowding and development have made London a more crowded city than ever before.

After the ruling, Haringey Council issued the statement that "live music events in public parks are no longer under threat." The Friends have a different opinion saying "the very parks that these events are to be hosted in are to become the victims, unprotected and free to be abused, and local residents will have to suffer."

The grounds for the judicial review were numerous. The Friends believe



the Council's consultation was unlawful, given that the public was provided with neither sufficient time or information to judge the festival's proposal properly. Additionally, they claim the Council's decision to close a large section of the park for the event contravenes Article 7 of the Ministry of Housing and Local Government Provisional Order Confirmation (Greater London Parks and Open Spaces) Act 1967 ("the 1967 Act") and section 44 of the Public Health Amendment Act 1890 ("the 1890 Act").

The court date was made possible by a prominent crowdfunding campaign that raised over £11,000 from 172 backers, among them the Highbury Community Association. Yet more cash will be needed to continue with proceedings, especially as a loss will see the Friends have to pay up to £10,000 of the Council's legal fees.

Wireless Festival attracted crowds of 50,000 people per day last year, unfortunately bringing antisocial behaviour and disruption to the local area with them. This year's, headlined

by famous artists such as Calvin Harris, Chase & Status and J.Cole, looks set to draw similar numbers.

Even though it now seems highly unlikely that Wireless Festival can be stopped, the HCA is pleased to see cooperation and dedication among the communities that it will affect. Hopefully action against similar future events will see the same coordination.

Residents who wish to support the case can do so at the following link: <https://www.crowdjustice.co.uk/case/save-finsbury-park/>. If you wish to find out more about The Friends of Finsbury Park's campaign, visit their website at <https://thefriendsoffinsburypark.org.uk>.

It would be advisable for residents with an interest in London's parks to keep a close eye on this case, as it may set a dangerous precedent to be repeated throughout the city and beyond. Even at this time, Haringey Council have plans for additional events that will threaten to disrupt Finsbury Park's status quo even further.

Islington in 5th place for social mobility of children from poorer backgrounds

By SARAH POTTER

The Social Mobility Index, published in January 2016 by the Social Mobility Commission, is the first measure of 'which are the best and worst places in England in terms of the opportunities young people from poorer backgrounds have to succeed'. The 324 local authority district areas are ranked in terms of the Index's indicators of progress in early years, school, and youth education and in adult social mobility.

The outcome is 'a new geography of disadvantage' which overturns previous assumptions about the prevalence of social divisions between rich and poor areas, cities and rural areas and the north and south. Instead, a much more complex pattern is revealed in which the most marked low social mobility 'coldspots' are in older industrial areas which have not developed service economies, and in formerly prosperous seaside towns.

One longstanding social divide, however, still persists and that is the very evident social mobility hotspot in London and its commuter belt. In spite of marked social deprivation in London, all the top ten local authority areas ranked highest for social mobility were London boroughs.

Islington ranks number five in the overall top ten, and also scores highly on separate rankings derived from

measures of school and youth social mobility. The one significant factor counting against the life chances of children from poorer backgrounds in London and the South East is housing, which figures in the adult social mobility indicators both in terms of affordability and home ownership.

Poorer children in many other large English cities, however, only achieve average educational outcomes and labour market outcomes, even though these cities share many of London's characteristics such as good transport and diverse populations. Disadvantaged children from ethnic minority backgrounds are '50% more

likely to achieve 5 good GCSEs including English and maths than those from white British backgrounds (42% v 28%)', according to the report.

The report concludes that although the life chances of poorer children in different parts of the country are massively different according to the Index, the fact that similar areas have such different mobility scores indicates that there is clear potential for improvement in the less socially mobile areas of England. What Alan Milburn, Chair of the Social Mobility Commission, calls the 'local lottery' in social mobility in his foreword to the report should be capable of change.

Hotspots			Coldspots		
Rank	Location	Region	Rank	Location	Region
1	Westminster	London	1	W. Somerset	South West
2	Wandsworth	London	2	Norwich	East
3	Redbridge	London	3	Wychavon	W. Midlands
4	Tower Hamlets	London	4	Corby	E. Midlands
5	Islington	London	5	Wellingborough	E. Midlands
6	Hackney	London	6	Fenland	East
7	Kensington & Chelsea	London	7	Waveney	East
8	Ealing	London	8	Mansfield	E. Midlands
9	Barnet	London	9	Blackpool	North West
10	Hammersmith & Fulham	London	10	Tameside	North West



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HCA objects to Sainsbury’s plans for another shop on Blackstock Road

By CHARLIE ROBERSON

Plans to open a Sainsbury’s Local on the site of the historic police station on Blackstock Road (pictured left) continue. The HCA has written to Islington Council’s Planning Department raising our objections to the development.

The letter states, “The Highbury Community Association represents just under one thousand residents and traders, mainly in the Highbury East and West wards of the borough.

“Our wish is that Blackstock Road should be a vibrant retail area, serving the needs of the local community but we do not believe that this application will support our hopes.

“This application seeks to add one

more retail unit to a road littered with empty retail units and other premises that have changed from retail to other use classes. If Sainsbury’s wish to take retail premises in the area, why do they not take over a shop with existing retail use, as they did further north in Blackstock Road, a couple of years ago? When the prospect of Sainsbury’s using the Old Police Station was first mooted, early in 2015, there was a petition signed by around two thousand local people opposing this. We do not believe that sentiment has changed since.

“This locally listed building deserves better; we would hope to see it providing some community benefit, if the leisure use for which permission was granted is not viable.”

The Highbury Community Association (HCA) represents local residents and businesses on all aspects of living and working in Highbury, Lower Holloway and Finsbury Park.

Membership is free. Members receive bi-monthly newsletters like this one. New members will receive the newsletter by email (unless you don’t have email).

To join or talk to us about anything Highbury-related, visit our website, or email hcanews@hotmail.com

The HCA can also be contacted on Facebook and Twitter.

The opinions expressed in Highbury Community News are not necessarily those of the HCA and/ or its committee members.

Please let us know if you move, so we can keep our membership list up to date.

Neighbourhood Watch group established in Highbury

By WILL PARKES

A new Neighbourhood Watch group has been set up in Plimsoll Road and surrounding streets in Highbury.

The new group met for the first time last November with around 40 local people participating, along with members of the local policing team. The meeting was also attended by Highbury Councillor and former

Mayor of Islington, Richard Greening.

Several local issues were raised, including drug dealing, mobile phone theft, scams and ‘distraction burglaries’. It is intended at the group works in conjunction with the Ward Partnership.

Anyone interested in joining or for more information should email plimsollroadneighbourhoodwatch@gmail.com for details.

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2016 Annual General Meeting of the Highbury Community Association

By DIANE BURRIDGE

Over 60 people attended this year's Annual General Meeting held at Christ Church on April 16th. The occasion (pictured below) provided updates on activities in the area and an informative speech by renowned academic Professor Tony Travers, followed by refreshments and over 20 raffle and auction prizes.

The Chair for the evening, Gill Shepherd, welcomed those present, in particular the former Mayor of Islington, Councillor Richard Greening, Jeremy Corbyn, local MP, sent in his apologies and wished the best for the evening.

Gill Shepherd discussed the HCA's main activities over the past year, noting groups that the Association has been actively engaged with. These included: Finsbury Park Station Users' Group; Friends of Finsbury Park; the Christ Church Spire Project group; Highbury Fields Forum; the Highbury West and East Ward Partnerships, and the London Forum of Amenity and Civic Societies. Specific representations were made on proposals for the Arsenal student tower; Highbury Corner traffic plans; Islington Council's new timings for

parking controls; and the Wireless Festival in Finsbury Park.

The Treasurer, John Egan, presenting the accounts, noted that the Highbury Community Association covered all costs this year, and has £5,425.96 in bank balances.



HCA committee members elected for the year from April 2016 were: Lucy Bradley, Diane Burridge, Bahar Choudhary, John Egan, David Fenton, Julie Horten, Beth Moir, Catriona Oliphant, Will Parkes, Sarah Potter, Charlie Roberson, Tom Rubens and Gill Shepherd.

The keynote speech was given by Professor Tony Travers (pictured above) from the London School of Economics, author of 'London's

Boroughs at 50'. He discussed the evolution of local government in London and future developments.

He noted that it was only when the London Metropolitan Works was set up in 1855 that London had any government structures, and these have evolved since in an accidental and unique way. The 1957 Royal Commission, upon reviewing local government (published 1960) recommended 51 self-sufficient boroughs. Throughout all these changes, the ancient City of London has kept its boundaries, and London has become an amorphous, 'infinite' and huge city of 600 square miles.

London is experiencing incredible and rapid change. The population is increasing by 110,000 to 120,000 per year, and there will be 10 million people by the 2030s, compared with 6.5 million in the early 1980s. There is massive pressure for more housing but in 2015/16 only 27,000 to 28,000 new homes were built. Do we need to have more intensive and bigger developments - with more infilling and taller towers? Will domestic dwellings be given permission to build two extra storeys without going through the planning process? Should the threshold for development decisions made by the Mayor be lowered?

Tony Travers noted that much road space had been effectively taken

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Continued from page 4...

away (by special bus-lanes etc), and that traffic speeds are now slower than before the congestion charge, introduced in 2003. Transport for London controls only 5% of the road network, with the rest controlled by the boroughs. There is a need to rationalise the number of bus routes so that buses are not competing for space and can provide a better planned service. Taxi services may need to be curtailed as well.

Some people think that there are too many boroughs, and suggestions have been made for between five and 14 instead of the 33 now. If we move to larger boroughs the case for stronger neighbourhood forums could be made. But as the culture of each borough is so distinct, could boroughs work together as merged units?

Following this speech, updates on local news were given. Tony Miller, a Trustee of the Highbury Roundhouse, advised those present that the tender has gone out for a contractor for works to start shortly. The Big Lottery's Regional Community Buildings Fund is supporting this project with £900,000, match funded by the Council. The Council has also agreed a Conditional Development Agreement stating that the Highbury Roundhouse can occupy the site for 99 years.

Janet Gilbert, Churchwarden at Christ Church, informed the meeting

that the Heritage Lottery Fund has agreed £206,000 for the Church Spire and the Highbury Heritage Project: - two-thirds of the funds required. The scaffolding should be down by August. The Highbury Heritage Project will include a touch screen inside the church which will give information on local aspects of the war, leisure, transport, planning and the Arsenal. The project is planned to be ready by November 2016.

The HCA thanks those kind enough to provide prizes for the AGM auction and raffle -
 Arsenal in the Community, Five Boys Health Store, Godfrey's, Highbury Butchers, Holistic Hair & Beauty, Kobkun Thai Therapy, The Master Cobbler, Meek & Wild, The Park Theatre, Prawn on the Lawn, San Daniele del Friuli, Seasons & Blossoms, Sunday Cafe in Gillespie Park and Woodland Hardware

Clive Carter of The Friends of Finsbury Park spoke about the legal action that the Friends are taking against Haringey Council due to their approval of another Wireless Festival in July 2016. The Highbury Community Association has supported this campaign and legal action due to the massive disturbance to the area last year, and the long-term impact that the festival has had on the Park, used by many local people.

Additional matters raised in the open discussion included concerns about the proposed closure of Corsica Street as part of the plans for Highbury Corner, the potential quietway on Drayton Park and the deterioration of Highbury Fields. Many people in particular questioned why the Council allows barbecues in a borough with limited open space.

There was also a call to enforce the 20mph zone as some streets are becoming 'race tracks' for dangerous drivers while concerns were expressed that the Government does not allow speed cameras to be put in the area. The Chair noted these concerns and said that the Highbury Community Association will be involved in responding to developments.

After the formal meeting, people enjoyed food, beverages and the raffle & auction. In total, £500 was raised for the charity for the evening: Christ Church's Spire Appeal and Highbury Heritage Project. Several individuals and local shops kindly donated prizes resulting in a high number of winners.

The Highbury Community Association would like to thank all those who attended and who made donations. Special appreciation must be given to Tony Travers for his engaging and thought-provoking speech. A high bar has been set for the 2017 Annual General Meeting next year!

Petition to save Highbury sorting office

By WILL PARKES

Royal Mail's plans to close the Highbury sorting office on Hamilton Park, N5 have been met with dismay by residents. The closure means postal staff would have to be driven to Highbury from North Road, N7 to make deliveries instead of on foot, which is the situation now. The change would mean having to travel to Tufnell Park to collect missed deliveries.

Local campaigner Terry Stacy has set up an online petition so people can register their opposition to the plans, which can be found at www.change.org/p/royal-mail-save-the-highbury-sorting-office

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The end of shops on Blackstock Road?

By DIANE BURRIDGE

Worrying changes are facing shops and restaurants along Blackstock Road and Highbury Vale. Restaurants such as Il Bacio, Garufa and Juniper Dining, have closed and there are development plans for where San Daniele del Friuli is sited. A planning application has also been submitted to convert the launderette at 140 Blackstock Road into housing.

The Government's Housing and Planning Bill will enable many changes of use from commercial to housing without requiring planning permission (Permitted Development Rights). This impending legislation is most likely catalysing some of the changes that we are seeing, and soon there will be little that we can do to influence proceedings.

In response to the **Planning Application: P2016/1425/PRA** - for the change of use of 140 Blackstock Road, London N4 2DX: from a launderette (Sui Generis use) to C3 (dwelling houses), the Highbury Community Association



(HCA) sent in an objection to Islington Council.

The HCA is writing to object to this planning application for similar reasons that we wrote, in April 2016, to express full support to the London Borough of Islington for refusing Planning Application P2015/4118/FUL (for the change of use of the launderette into retail/office use, A1/A2). This initial application is now under appeal. We are concerned to keep this site in use as Sui Generis use, as part of the services which are essential to the local area.

The HCA is greatly concerned that if approved this application would result in the loss of a launderette, a vital service in this area. The majority of households near this launderette site do not have access to a car and are renting in small social or privately let accommodation, in one of the poorest and most densely-populated boroughs in the country. Many local people rely heavily on amenities within walking distance. There is also a backpackers' hostel opposite the launderette site, and many council estates nearby.

Paragraph 7.1 of the Planning Statement (in the Application P2015/4118/FUL) asserts that the proposals will 'enhance the vitality and appearance of this section of Blackstock Road'. A dwelling unit, now being applied for instead, would certainly not add vitality to this row of shops. And a dwelling unit is definitely unlikely to be as vibrant, or essential, as a launderette which serves a wide cross-section of the immediate area.

The HCA is concerned about maintaining this local shopping parade, between Monsell Road and Elwood Street, as this offers a full range of practical and essential shopping and support services all contributing to the viability of the parade.

Such a range of practical facilities is such an asset for the area, and we feel very strongly that this parade must never be broken up. Neighbouring shopkeepers are very worried because any change from Sui Generis use to a dwelling unit could start a domino reaction. These proposals would undermine our local shopping centre and would deliver only one dwelling. The losses to our local community would far outweigh the benefits.

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City North at Finsbury Park - yet more 'buy to leave'?

By DIANE BURRIDGE

Two 23 storey towers alongside a 12 storey building are planned next to Finsbury Park station, very near Finsbury Park. Described in publicity as a 'flagship, mixed-use development... creating a new destination for shopping and dining', it will look to many like yet another case of soulless overdevelopment in London.

At a public display in May 2016 organised by the developers Telford Homes, in partnership with the Business Design Centre Group, it was difficult, for example, to see any play areas for children. Upon request, I was shown two small areas: one on a roof and a small gated one tucked away in the shadows of the towers.

Perhaps families are not expected to live in this development? The hosts of this exhibition did not know what sizes the units would be when asked and of the 355 planned residential apartments only 47 (12%) will be for 'affordable' rent, managed by Newlon Housing Association. I dread to think what the 'affordable' rent will be.

Of the 308 private apartments remaining, 161 have already been sold off-plan overseas. A tour of the East is now in the pipeline for the remaining 147 homes left to sell. But there will also be a launch in London, I was reassuringly told, as I looked downcast upon hearing this

information.

The development will be completed by 2020, and will include a supermarket, a new western entrance into Finsbury Park station, a cinema and gym, as well as 17 commercial units.

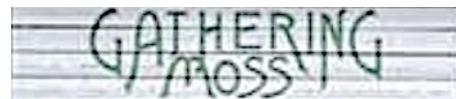
I find it unbelievable that Islington Council approved this development and in doing so went against their own planning policies: tiny private play areas, obstructive views of the towers when looking from Finsbury Park, little social housing, and many units sold to overseas investors, likely as 'buy to leave' properties.

What sort of 'communities' are we developing? How could Islington Council have allowed such 'regeneration'? The Council's own planning policy states that no more than 10 storeys are allowed outside the central zone. Section 4.3.2 of the Finsbury Park Development Framework Supplementary Planning Document (March 2016) states that tall buildings in this area are no longer supported under current policy. One has to ask then why was this development supported in the first place, changing the whole area in one planning approval?

It is no wonder that people renting and wanting to buy a home in London feel alienated if this is the housing that is being built, even by 'caring' councils. This latest development, the latest addition to a city-wide trend, begs the question: what are we doing to London?



Artist's impression of the City North development



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Highbury West Ward Partnership forges new ties between community and police

By CHARLIE ROBERSON

The Highbury West Ward Partnership held its first meeting earlier this year. The organisation has been created to build good relationships between the community and London's police force. It is hoped that this will help raise awareness about local risks and make Highbury West a safer and happier area.

Although Highbury West is one of the safest wards in Islington, residents will be pleased to see the police and community groups working together on issues such as burglaries and mobile phone thefts.

Members of the membership's panel include Mohammed Kozbar, Imam of Finsbury Park Mosque, and the HCA's Julie Horten. The panel will receive support from the Met, including possible training and guidance for members of the panel. Future meetings may see briefings from the police on issues such as local crime statistics and steps that can be taken to prevent crimes.

Meetings will be held regularly and at least one a year will be open to the public. Additional plans to engage the wider community include setting up a mailing list that could serve as a 'virtual panel' to allow residents to register concerns.

The HCA looks forward to seeing the Highbury West Ward Partnership develop and hopes it will be another valued institution in our community.

Do you have a local story you would like to see in the next edition? Email us at hcanews@hotmail.com with your ideas...

Gillespie Park's 20th anniversary celebrated by local community

Photo reproduced from the Islington Gazette



By CHARLIE ROBERSON

Gillespie Park recently celebrated its 20th anniversary as a nature reserve with a day of festivities and fun on Sunday 22nd May. The park, originally founded in 1981, had once been seen as viable space to construct flats but local activism saw the area preserved as one of the area's most loved green spaces.

The huge crowds drawn by the event indicate that the public has lost no enthusiasm for Islington's own public oasis. The Islington Gazette reported that more than 500 people gathered for the event.

Among the attendees (pictured above) were Mayor of Islington, Kat Fletcher, Council Leader Richard Watts and local MP Jeremy Corbyn,

who fought the property development two decades ago and talked about some of these campaigning experiences to attendees. The HCA's Diane Burrige is pictured on the far left.

Activities at the event included live music, nature-themed crafts and a penalty shootout organised by the Arsenal Foundation.

Gillespie Park is maintained by the work of volunteers who put in 2,000 hours a year to maintain the park. This effort pays off in the impressive biodiversity that can be found in the nature reserve. With over 240 species of plants as well as numerous birds and butterflies, Gillespie Park is rightly praised for its natural splendour. We hope it will continue to thrive in the coming years.

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