



HIGHBURY COMMUNITY NEWS

FROM THE HIGHBURY COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION

Important changes to the privacy of our medical records starting March 2014

Have you noticed an innocuous - looking blue green and white leaflet like this one coming through your door in the last few weeks? Since it arrived as part of a junk mail delivery, you may well have thrown it away without even reading it. But even if you read it, you might have thought it referred merely to the sharing of GP records with consultants. Unfortunately there is much more than this at stake, and the failure to consult the public formally about what is proposed is a scandal.

GP practices across England will soon be required to supply patients' personal and confidential medical information, on a regular and continuous basis, to the Health and Social Care Information Centre (HSCIC). Details from your medical record will be extracted from the practice, without your permission, in a form that can identify you, and will include your NHS number, your date of birth, your postcode, gender and ethnicity, all your medical diagnoses, referrals to specialists, prescriptions, family history, blood test and screening test results, body mass index and your smoking and/or drinking habits.

This programme of data extraction is called care.data and

the information uploaded will be used for so-called 'secondary uses' - i.e. for purposes other than your own direct medical care. The data will be made available to organisations outside of the NHS, such as researchers and commercial organisations, who will pay to access to the data. Medical staff treating you at your GP surgery, in hospitals, A and E clinics etc. will not have access to this database.



As MedConfidential, (an independent, non-partisan public campaign group fighting for confidentiality and consent in health and social care) and others point out there are several serious issues with anonymity, contrary to official reassurances. Under the Health and Social Care Act 2012, GP practices have no option but to allow the HSCIC to extract this information. Once the data has been extracted, the GP practice is no longer the data controller for that information, and cannot control or protect in any way how that information is used, shared, or who has access to it.

Opting out: Although GPs cannot object to this information leaving the practice, individual patients and their families can instruct their practice to prohibit

the transfer of their data: **you have the right to opt out.** Opting out will not affect your own care in any way at all, but if you do nothing, it is assumed that you have opted in, and your medical data will be extracted and uploaded to the HSCIC. Once it is there, you will not be able to get it deleted. **The data upload is due to start very soon - in March 2014 - so you need to act now.** The leaflet fails to provide an opt-out form letter, and you are told to discuss concerns with your GP. But there is a much simpler way which we urge you to take.

Go to the website <http://medconfidential.org> which tells you much more about care.data, and gives you an opt-out letter to download. It includes reference to the two processes your GP needs to opt you out of - uploading your data from the GP practice, and disclosure of your data to others by the HSCIC. We are also providing this letter on the HCA website for download. But fill it in soon! More information can be found on the Medconfidential website and The Guardian published an informative analysis which can be found online: <http://www.theguardian.com/society/2014/jan/19/nhs-patient-data-available-companies-buy>

GILL SHEPHERD



The HCA represents over 900 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, please email hcanews@hotmail.com

The opinions expressed in HCN are not necessarily those of the Highbury Community Association and its committee members.

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Arsenal loses appeal for more concerts

The planning enquiry into the application by Arsenal to hold additional concerts at the Emirates Stadium took place 10th to 19th December 2013 at the Crescent Suite in Ronalds Road. To our relief we heard mid January that the application was thrown out. The enquiry was chaired by David Smith, a chartered town planner, appointed by the Secretary of State to hear Arsenal Football Club's appeal against Islington Council's decision to refuse the application to hold more concerts.

Arsenal's team was headed by Ken Friar and David Cooper, Arsenal's lawyer and the highest paid solicitor in Britain, according to the Daily Mail, with support from Savills. Islington Council's team was headed by Robert Walton QC from Landmark Chambers, a highly regarded planning barrister, supported by various council officers from the areas of planning, transport and noise.

Arsenal's side spent about two days outlining their case as to why they desperately need more concerts - in order to generate about an additional million pounds per year for the Club - a paltry sum overall. Islington Council responded for two days as to why concerts cause great disturbance to residents and disrupt the surrounding areas in many ways, all negative.

Third parties were represented by HCA, which presented its own evidence on noise levels and disruption to life and a number of local residents also made their voices heard. Rev. Stephen Coles from St. Thomas's Church explained the disruption the current and additional concerts would cause as did residents from Bryantwood Road. Danny Michelson from La Fromagerie represented the Highbury Barn Traders.

ROGER WRIGHT

We would like to thank Roger for all his work on this case, including for time spent collecting evidence and representing third parties on each day of the planning enquiry on behalf of the HCA.

Concerts: an update from Highbury Ward Councillors

The planning inspectorate recently backed Islington Council's decision to reject Arsenal's plans to double the number of concerts held at the Emirates. As local councillors, we listened carefully to residents and campaigned hard against the Club on this issue, so the planning inspector's judgement is good news.

We have also been lobbying our neighbours at Haringey Council to limit the number of big gigs they allow in Finsbury Park, including writing publicly to raise our concerns with the Leader of Haringey Council. As a result, the number of multi-day events they will permit in the park each year has come down from six to five. They have agreed that there will be no clashes with major events at the Emirates. And noise and license monitoring will now also take place on the Islington side of the park.

We shall continue to press Haringey Council to set maximum attendance limits and earlier finish times and to insist upon better street management, including barriers along key routes from nearby stations. In the end, commercial interests must not be allowed to trump the interests of the local community at central London venues surrounded by residential streets.

ANDY HULL, THERESA DEBONO, RICHARD GREENING,
Highbury West Councillors

Here To help in Islington!

Launched in January 2013, Here To Islington is the collaborative brainchild of Isledon and FutureGov, and was commissioned by Islington Council. Co-created with residents and local groups, Here To connects local people with local projects in a fun and flexible way through a website: islington.hereto.org. Its aim is to start a bold movement in the borough that empowers residents to use their free time better to meet personal goals, while also contributing to community life.

Research by Here To showed that many of the challenges organisations face when looking to mobilise volunteers can be addressed with more clearly defined thinking or planning before recruiting. They therefore work with local groups to translate their needs into vibrant, fulfilling opportunities that make clear what exactly is involved. Here To can then help people who live, work and play in Islington to think about what they want to get out of volunteering and the 'secret skills' they have to offer a

project or community group. This ranges anywhere from organising Oxfam Islington's shop window display and befriending older residents to children's outdoor story telling in Olden Community Gardens, ushering at the King's Head theatre on Upper Street, editing a newsletter, or even teaching scuba diving. There really is something for everyone, whatever your interests, skills or time commitments.

Over the past year since Here To first launched, hundreds of people have not only benefited through their involvement by such as learning to cook or watching free theatrical performances. Two local volunteers, Karim Lahsinat and Joe Mitchell, share thoughts on their experience: Karim first found out about Here To when looking to make a career-change from the commercial sector. "By helping to organise Here To's 1st Birthday event at Islington Town Hall, I am getting great experience for my CV that fits around my job search and allows me to learn new digital/social media skills". Joe, who

recently moved to the area, started volunteering at Dorcas, a local Befriending Organisation, said "It was a perfect, accessible way to find a local project that fits around my day job". Herve Nourisson, the Volunteer Manager at Dorcas' says: "Joe, has been visiting an elderly man in sheltered accommodation, and the staff there have reported an amazing transformation in his general well-being, energy and willingness to engage since Joe began visiting him. The same is true of other local helpers who have come through Here To."

Getting involved through Here To Islington is quick and simple: just visit their clear, user-friendly website www.islington.hereto.org, click on a project you like the look of, select a date you are free and submit your details. It takes less than 5 minutes. Alternatively, give them a call on 020 3475 3825. They also welcome enquiries from local organisations or community groups looking for people to help them out. KATHERINE HORSHAM, Here To

Concerts at Finsbury Park- additional update

Previously, five days for events per year were allowed, now five major events taking 'up to' three days each have been agreed per year. This makes a total of 15 days, not including the days to set up and dismantle equipment and staging before and after events.

The area in the park for these events is near the Seven Sisters Road entrance which faces the boroughs of Hackney and Islington; given that Islington has the least amount of open space in the country and the highest density of population, it is disgraceful that parks are being treated this way.

Haringey councillors have stated that the parks need to generate more money, due to the cuts in basic services. However, we all need access green open spaces for mental well-being, to exercise, for people to meet and for children to play in a quiet and non-polluting environment.

If you wish to express your concerns, please write to Cllr Claire Kober the Leader of Haringey Council. Friends of Finsbury Park are continuing to show their concerns and the Highbury Community Association will do likewise.

DIANE BURRIDGE, HCA committee member

Itching to get creative?



A cornucopia of wonders confronts you as you enter Wools and Crafts - a shop situated incongruously amongst the takeaways and pubs on Blackstock Road near Mountgrove Road.

Set up over 30 years ago by the Vig family, this shop is a treasure trove of tapestry wools, crochet cottons, clothes dyes, needlecraft kits, stencils and transfers, embroidery threads, toy stuffings, beads and sequins, stain removers, buttons and magnifiers... The speciality shop has established a base of regular customers who come from as and far as south London and Finchley- some of whom are teachers in crafts and design. With an increasing interest in home made goods, Wools and Crafts is such an asset for Highbury residents. 'More people are going back to knitting and people want to create something different- including teenagers interested in experimenting with fashion,' explained Mrs Vig.

You'll find Wools and Crafts at: 169 Blackstock Road, t: 020 7359 1274, and on ebay: stores.ebay.co.uk/lenarowitdwoolsandcrafts
DIANE BURRIDGE

N16 Writers and Readers at the Stoke Newington Bookshop

For many years my fellow novelist, Sue Gee, and I have been organising monthly literary events in Stoke Newington. Since 1995 we've held at least a hundred-and-eighty, and our host for many years has been the Stoke Newington Bookshop - a superb independent shop run with real commitment to books and authors. Like the bookshop we have a strong interest in local authors but also cast our net wide.

The format is simple: our guest speaks for about forty-five minutes and then takes questions from the audience. They usually tell us about their latest book and often about their life as an author; how they started, plan a book, do research, and so on. Sometimes we invite people from other parts of the writing business - publishers, editors and agents.

We've had some very distinguished writers come to speak, including Margaret Drabble, Julian Barnes, Alan Hollinghurst, and Siri Hustvedt, and we've been good at grabbing writers just before they become famous. We secured Hisham Matar before *In the Country of Men* was shortlisted for the 2006 Man Booker Prize, and Justin Cartwright the year before *The Promise of Happiness* scooped a number of prizes. On 14th April Hilary Mackaskill will talk about her new book: *Daphne Du Maurier at Home*, and the distinguished local author, Penelope Lively, is lined up for 8th September.

Our events are open to all without pre-booking and take place on the second Monday of every month (except August) at 8pm at the Stoke Newington Bookshop, 159 Stoke Newington High St. There is no charge although we invite a contribution of £2.50 and offer attendees a glass of wine. Just turn up and/or send me an email if you'd like to be on our emailing-list:
charlespalliser@gmail.com

CHARLES PALLISER

The woman behind the Faces

Nicola Baird is a long time Islington resident, journalist, environmental campaigner and author of seven books and the person behind the weekly and legendary Islington Faces blog (www.islingtonfacesblog.com). Since starting in summer 2012 she has published over 60 interviews with people who live or work in Islington. We asked her for the story behind her blog and the characters that inspire her:



I'm lucky to have lived in Islington since leaving university in 1986, starting at the top of Highbury Hill - the first place a friend and I could find to flat share. I've moved three times around Highbury, although I've also spent a few years away from London, once living in the South Pacific as a VSO, and also for a short spell in Oxford. I grew up in rural Hertfordshire so London has a real pull. I now live in Finsbury Park with my husband, our two daughters, dog and hens.

I love Islington but couldn't quite pin down why - it's the people isn't it? And yet the cliché view of an Islington resident seems to throw up just three super successful blokes - Boris Johnson, Nick Robinson and Clive Anderson. I follow a wonderful blog called Spitalfieldslife.com with daily profiles of people. It covers the southerly end of Islington but not the whole borough. Basically I copied that blog, having asked the writer if they'd mind if I started writing one. I got sent the sweetest reply from the anonymous Gentle Author, saying 'yes, go ahead'. I'm also lucky to work from home so it is easy to organise interviews to suit my interviewees and me.

Everyone has a story, but older people often have better ones - of the Blitz and bombsites to play on, crazy squat parties, and Arsenal matches you could sneak into for free at the end. I'm also curious why people come to Islington - and why this bit of Islington. It's a licence to be nosey really. There's so much to ask our neighbours, and as a result of interviewing so many people my own experience walking around the streets locally is enriched because I know so many more people that much better.

To celebrate the first 35 interviews I created an e-book - the cover is of Alan Banks the amazing N4 milkman who kids his grandchild that he drives a spaceship. Alan had so many riveting stories about life in Islington when the rest of us are asleep. Since he works at night (well, early morning!) very few people even knew they could still get their milk delivered. I am always looking for people to interview - not famous, just people with a story who live or work in Islington. They can contact me via nicolabaird.green@gmail.com. Please do follow www.islingtonfacesblog.com (and you can find out more about me at www.nicolabaird.com)

NICOLA BAIRD

Invitation to the Highbury Committee Association AGM

The HCA would like to invite you to the AGM Saturday 26 April 2014 at 7pm at Christ Church, Highbury.

The general meeting will start at 7.15pm and last approximately half an hour, with plenty of opportunities to ask questions and discuss the latest issues followed by a party. Rev. Stephen Coles of St Thomas' Church will be the keynote speaker. Save the date, we would be delighted to see you there!

IMPORTANT REQUEST: To help us get in touch with our members quickly regarding important issues and events, if you are not already on our emailing list please send us your email address to hcanews@hotmail.com.

Islington Council loses office-to-homes legal challenge

The London Boroughs of Islington, Camden, Richmond upon Thames and Lambeth together brought two actions against the new office-to-residential permitted development rights, introduced by the Government on 30 May 2013. This legislation revised the General Permitted Development Order to allow conversions from offices to residences to take place without the need for planning permission.

The four boroughs were successful in their application for a judicial review; however the High Court hearing held on 4 December 2013 was unsuccessful. Office space can now be converted to residential use without planning permission being sought. In a statement, Islington Council complained that councils have "lost the ability to protect office space, and they are not able to demand that new homes are affordable or even meet basic space standards...With no need for planning permission, residents' rights to be notified in advance [of these conversions] and to raise any objection have been swept away."

The councils argued that the way the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) allowed certain areas to opt out from the change, but not others, was unlawful. Before it introduced the new permitted development rules on 30 May 2013, the Government granted exemptions to 17 local authorities for the whole or parts of their areas, of the 165 councils which applied.

The new rules mean that developers seeking office-to-residential changes must submit applications under a 'prior approval' system. Islington Council, late 2013, said it had received 27 'prior approval' applications which have resulted in the loss of almost 17,000 square metres of B1 office floorspace, equating to about 1,400 jobs. Meanwhile, Richmond Council has received 107 such applications, the most of any London borough. We need to monitor developments locally to identify any negative impacts on our shopping parades as a result of this legislation.

Mainly from: 'Planning Resource', 8th November 2013 (updated), London Forum of Amenity and Civic Society's website. Highbury Community Association is a member of the London Forum.

DIANE BURRIDGE



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HIGHBURY COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION

www.highburycommunity.org

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Tasting the Seasons on our doorstep



As far back as I could remember, it had always been the launderette on the corner of Sotheby Road, and when it closed down it almost felt like we had lost a local institution.

Many of you will be familiar with the shop that replaced it; Seasons and Blossoms, if not as a customer then as a passer by. If you have passed over the threshold, you will most probably be familiar with Rabiye's boundless enthusiasm for everything her shop encompasses. Asking her what is her vision for the shop, she replied 'like a village shop in the community, where people can come to have a chat... soon I'm going to be able to start organising things like food tasting'. Since opening in June 2013 Seasons and Blossoms has been evolving, a bit like a living and breathing organism; whenever I go in there is always fresh seasonal produce she has personally chosen or the layout slightly altered... another shelf with something interesting on, or new idea she's excited about.

For myself at least, I understand it not just as a shop but as a project, and I think this is the essence which is key to why I have grown so fond of this place. Given that she'd never owned a shop before I wondered what had inspired her? "When I moved from London to Kent I realised how different life is outside London; one of these things was access to

fresh, seasonal fruit and vegetables was much easier, there was greater variety. I saw we had much more growing in this country, that it wasn't all grown abroad and I was inspired by the idea that I could be a bridge between local farmers and locals in London. So that is what I have been doing and it takes time to build lots of relationships with small farmers and producers but I really enjoy meeting them and seeing where the food is grown. So it's about healthy, natural food that tastes good and being able to support these people too." Seasonal, produce from local farms so far has included pumpkins, apples (too many varieties to list), potatoes, sprouts, rhubarb, strawberries, gooseberries, raspberries, cobnuts. Other local produce on the shelves includes organic free range eggs and honey, bread from Spence Bakery, lettuce grown at Finsbury Park, homemade preserves, jams, marmalade and cake. While the front of the shop is mainly dedicated to fresh produce which she also personally goes to the market to buy, towards back of the shop near the fresh and dry herbs, in the refrigerator it is possible to find small prepared salads, organic dairy, soups, cheeses and olives and up a little flight of stairs there is a notable organic presence among the dry or health food stuffs.

Why Highbury, why this shop? "my experience of the area - I did a job decorating and building in Islington and I also owned a café gallery in Stoke Newington - I liked it, and when I saw this shop, positioned on the corner with these big

windows... I didn't have to think too much, I just knew" came her resolute response. Look out for those big windows being open in the summer selling drinks and ice cream- well that's the plan. Until then there's a café inside that also serves homemade soup (with smoothies coming soon). Seasons is open 8am-8pm, Monday-Sunday. Pop in even if it's simply to have a look, and keep an eye out for different tasting events too. 92 Highbury Park, N5 2XE, t: 02071594867, www.seasonsandblossoms.com. LUCY BRADLEY

Ladbroke House planning application

Following the two day public exhibition on 4th and 5th October, when 79 people commented on the proposals, a planning application, validated by the London Borough of Islington, has now been submitted for the site. The application reference number is P2013/4593/FUL and details can be viewed online through the Islington planning application search webpage.

The proposals would see the building redeveloped for mixed use, providing new homes, including affordable housing, for local people, with office space at ground and lower ground floor level. The façade would be restored in keeping with the existing character of Highbury Grove and the local conservation area. Watch this space!