



# HIGHBURY COMMUNITY NEWS

FROM THE HIGHBURY COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION

## The Changing Face of Highbury

**Joanna Fischl has lived in Highbury for five years and is currently studying for an MSc in Social Policy Research at the London School of Economics. She recently undertook a Future Cities research project as part of her coursework, in particular looking at the ways London neighbourhoods are changing. She used the opportunity to speak to Highbury residents who have lived here for a number of years to find out about their perspectives on the changes they have lived through. Here she shares her reflections on the project's findings.**

As well as my own curiosity as a local resident, I was inspired by my research interest in social inequality and, in particular, in last year's press coverage of the Cripplegate Foundation's report on poverty and inequality in Islington. For me, it was particularly relevant to learn how long-term Highbury residents had experienced the growing social polarisation of Islington in recent decades. Although this was a brief project, there were some interesting findings which it would be fascinating to explore through further research.

The interviewees, including members of the Highbury Association Committee, gave the impression of having been part of a tight knit community over the years, sharing many positive memories of their time in the area. One interviewee mentioned the solidarity which developed among residents over the

original campaign to prevent the expansion of the old Arsenal stadium. The multi-cultural nature of living in Islington was seen as a particularly strong asset, with another interviewee feeling the enormous benefits which her children had gained from going to primary school with children from a range of cultural backgrounds.

It is clear that Highbury has been through significant changes in the past 20 to 30 years. Interviewees spoke about how the reputation of the area has shifted dramatically, with one pointing out that at the time she moved to Highbury in the 70s she thought of the area as being 'the wrong side of Holloway Road'. Animosity between football fans was far greater than it is today; one resident recalls witnessing a brutal attack between fans and having a

brick thrown through her car window on a match day.

However, the most common theme was the inexorable rise of house prices, raising the question of the threat it might pose to the sense of community in the area. There was a feeling that the socially mixed nature of the area was decreasing as only the very wealthy, the 'city slickers', could afford to move in, increasing the divide between rich and poor. One resident commented on the building of more and more new blocks of flats, often bought as second homes or sold as buy-to-let properties - meaning an increasingly transient population of young renters, unable to afford to remain in the area long-term and perhaps therefore less engaged in the community.

*continued on page 4*



**Highbury Community Association**  
**Come to the HCA AGM and Party!**  
**Saturday 26th April at 7:00pm**  
**Christ Church, Highbury Grove, N5**



★ Wine and food!

- ★ What has the HCA been doing in the last year? What would you like the HCA to do?
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- ★ **New committee members urgently needed. If interested please email: [hcanews@hotmail.com](mailto:hcanews@hotmail.com)**



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](mailto: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 Football Club busy in the Courts

Since we told you in our last issue that a Planning Inspector had supported Islington Council's rejection of Arsenal Football Club's application to hold more concerts at the Ashburton Grove stadium, we were notified that the club had applied for a Judicial Review of that decision to be held in the High Court. This application has been accepted by the Court authorities. The Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, Eric Pickles, has announced that his department will defend the challenge against the Inspectorate's planning decision, alongside Islington Council. The hearing will be on 22nd July 2014. We all hope the Inspector's decision will be upheld by the Court.

Members of the public are entitled to attend court but not participate and the hearing will take place in Royal Courts of Justice on the Strand. The court room will be published the day before on the RCJ court listing webpage: <http://www.justice.gov.uk/courts/court-lists/list-rcj>

By the time this issue goes to press, the Appeal Court will have heard, on 19th March, the Club's case on the proposed student accommodation tower in Hornsey Road. This application was initially refused by London Borough of Islington, but this was overturned by a Planning Inspector. The Council sought a Judicial Review of that decision and this was heard in the High Court last July. The High Court quashed the decision of the Planning Inspector and supported the Council's position. Arsenal Football Club then sought Leave to Appeal from the Appeal Court and this was granted.

ROGER WRIGHT

## New Islington Safer Neighbourhood Board

The HCA is seeking a volunteer to become a community representative on a new Safer Neighbourhood Board being set up by the police and Islington Council.

This new board will meet a minimum of four times a year and will give local people and victims a greater voice in setting policing priorities and improve consultation between the community, the police, the council and other partners.

**Board responsibilities include:** setting local policing and crime priorities, monitoring police and partner performance in tackling crime, monitoring victim complaints and complaints against local police officers, and deciding how the Mayor's Office for Policing and Crime (MOPAC) funding is spent in Islington.

**The board membership** will come from a range of community representatives, including members of the Safer Neighbourhood Panels, local businesses, Victim Support, faith groups, students unions, the independent custody visitor's panel, the Stop and Search Monitoring Group and the community network. The board will be independent of the police, council and other statutory bodies and will have no politicians or police officers holding senior positions. **Anyone who lives on the borough can express in interest to become a community representative.**

If you are interested and wish to discuss this further, call Gill Shepherd of the HCA on 020 7354 2705. You can also find out how to sign-up at: [www.islington.gov.uk/crimesummit](http://www.islington.gov.uk/crimesummit)

# Plants for Spring



If you absolutely must have instant effect, buy some pots of dwarf narcissus "Tete-a-tete" from a greengrocer, because they can be planted out in your garden or in pots or window boxes, and every future spring they will come up and flower. They look charming and, unlike big daffodils, they do not fall over if it is windy.

If you are more organised and thinking about future springs, buy a few ramsons by mail-order in the autumn. Ramsons are the UK's native garlic; they have smart strap-like leaves and pretty white flowers. Plant where they will get some sun and they will reliably spread



over the years. When you have enough you can eat the garlicky leaves and flowers for which you can find recipes on the internet.



A good spring climber is clematis alpina, which has small nodding heads that look rather like an upside down tulip, and colours include violet-blue, pink and white. These are very pretty, and also popular with bumble bees.

For a wide selection of plants which flourish in and have come from Islington's gardens, come to the Islington Gardeners' annual Plant Sale on Sunday 18 May from 2.30 - 4.30 pm at 36 St Mary's Grove, N1. Free entry, everybody welcome. Teas and home-made cakes will be available.

## Open Days at the Olden Garden

Highbury's community garden, opposite 22 Whistler Street, N5, will be open to the public again this year. Its herbaceous borders, Rambling Rector rose, lawn, meadow and vegetable plot are at their best in June, and the first event on Sunday 8th June will be part of the Chelsea Fringe, the alternative garden festival ([www.chelseafringe.com](http://www.chelseafringe.com)).

Planning ahead & dates for the diary: On Saturday June 14th, the garden will be open 2-5 pm for Open Squares Day ([www.opensquares.org](http://www.opensquares.org)), with tea and homemade cakes. On Sunday June 15th, 2-5 pm, it will open under the National Garden Scheme ([www.ngs.org.uk](http://www.ngs.org.uk)), and the proceeds will go to cancer charities. Tea and cake will be available.

## Highbury Arts Club: a review

I went to the recently opened Highbury Arts Club on a Thursday evening - which happens to be Jazz Night, with a duo playing some old time favourites. The Highbury Arts Club is a Tapas bar seating about 24 customers at a long communal table, two tables for four and some stools by the window. The owner is Simon Moore and he employs two Spanish Chefs; he doesn't speak Spanish and they don't speak English but regardless, the result is some terrific food. Many of the items on the tapas menu cost £4.50 and are

really delicious. We tried most of them: Mushroom Croquettas, Black Pudding Pincho with crispy patatas frittatas, Calamares (delicious but a little skimpy as they cost £6), Avocado Salad, White Bean Salad, Patatas Bravas, Goats Cheese Salad and a Chicken Leg stuffed with almond sauce. There were also two delicious desserts - Spanish Rice Pudding and Spanish Cheese Pudding. Coffee was OK too. In addition to the tapas there are some main dishes on the Board each night.

Simon has some excellent wines but they are not particularly cheap. We were about to order a bottle when he came over and suggested we tried a couple of tasters - no

more than a quarter glass of each - a white and a red. They were excellent but the red wine was £40 a bottle - great for a special occasion maybe. We would have appreciated knowing the cost of the tasters before opting for them - looking at the bill later at home I saw that the two tasters had cost us £13. Nevertheless, we are lucky to have such an innovative new place to eat and really well-prepared food.

73 Highbury Park, N5 1UA (07826 8994999). Open for brunch Wed-Fri 8.30am-2pm, Sat-Sun 10am-2.30pm; tapas and bar Tue-Sat 6.30pm-11pm. About £45 pp (including two glasses of wine). DAVID FENTON

## Seasons and Blossoms

We are a new shop in Highbury selling a large range of fresh fruit and vegetables and organic health foods.

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Islington Ecology Centre, 191 Drayton Park, Highbury N5  
[highburytime@live.co.uk](mailto:highburytime@live.co.uk)

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Lack of new social housing provision was also commented on which, along with the selling off of council homes in the 80s, was seen as having an ongoing impact on the community.

The sense that some of the street interaction had been lost was clear from interviewees; one resident who grew up in Highbury in the 90s remembers all the vibrant local characters in the street where she grew up, and recalls the wide range of ages and professional backgrounds of her neighbours. She says that children do not play outside together as much anymore and there is a tendency for people to be more insular and contained in their homes.

Nevertheless, despite these concerns it is also clear that much of the attraction of Highbury still remains; residents speak fondly of local green spaces, enjoy local events and speak of the 'village' feel of the Highbury Barn shopping parade and value the independent shops run by local owners. Many neighbourhoods in London have seen considerable change in recent decades, with the various stages of gentrification clearly visible from borough to borough. Speaking to local residents emphasised my own feelings about the benefits of cohesive, integrated and socially mixed communities - and what might be lost in communities in inner London boroughs in the future if current trends continue.

JOANNA FISCHL

## Planning issue: Former Highbury Vale Police Station

There has been a lot of talk, posters and petitions about the future use of this locally listed building, located at 211 Blackstock Road. However, much of the attention has been generated by talk of Sainsburys or Co-op, names which are irrelevant to the real planning issue: should part of this building be given planning permission for retail use? My view is that it should not.

Some years ago this building was deemed surplus to the police's operational requirements and identified by Islington's Site Allocation Plan of June 2013 as a site with development potential. This document suggested "refurbishment of the existing building and sensitive development of the remainder of the site to provide mixed-use development." It added that "commercial and employment generating uses which contribute to the vitality of the (Finsbury Park) town centre are important."

A planning application for the building of six terraced houses to the rear of the site, fronting on to Canning Road, has been approved but work has not yet begun. There are several empty retail premises within 200 meters of the site and other premises which were formerly retail but have now been converted to other uses. This would suggest that there is no unfulfilled demand for retail premises in this area. There is nothing about the old police station which makes it especially suitable for conversion to retail use and it would, in my view, be better if the ground and lower ground floors became offices for which there appears some demand in the area. This would meet the site allocation's requirement for employment generating use, which would respect the residential amenity of neighbouring properties. The rest of the building could be converted for residential use, for which there is demand.

JOHN EGAN

## Sotheby Mews' bustling Day Centre



Surprisingly, we fought and won the battle against closure of our Sotheby Mews Day Centre in Sotheby Road (N5). For the last three years we have been providing a wide range of events and social activities for senior citizens from Islington and Highbury, managed by Highbury Roundhouse.

Our club helps older people to make new friends, have discussions and get involved in activities as diverse as Zumba, pilates, men's circuit training, short mat bowls, chair based exercise, singing, art, knitting, bingo and space for raised bed gardening. We also organise trips and outings, for example to Margate beach or Hyde Park, and also offer a limited door-to-door transport service and a shopping trip to help with that heavy weekly shop. At our sociable Pensioners' Lunch Club, which runs from Tuesday to Friday from 10:00 - 15:00, we serve hot, healthy and well-balanced meals with a choice of menu that includes Halal and Caribbean cuisine, all at a cost of £3.50.

We always welcome new members and friends to visit and join. Recently a single, elderly man, who had just had surgery, joined and realised what he has been missing out on: "You're a friendly bunch and the foods good here ain't it! ... It's nice finding help and support I didn't know what I'd have done without yours recently". In addition to what we do at the centre we were able to point him in the right direction for ongoing support.

We would like to grow our team of enthusiastic volunteers so we can make the services we offer even better and more diverse. We are always on the look out for tutors and facilitators to bring new ideas and activities which improve the wellbeing and independence of our older people. We are planning to reintroduce our social dance sessions, so if you have expertise, or know someone who does, that would be invaluable, maybe you can offer an hour or two on a Thursday morning to help out in our Art Class, or if you just like to chat or make tea and coffee this would also be a big help.

For more information, please contact Nigel Williams, Older Peoples Service Manager on 0207 226 1421 or email [sothebymews@gmail.com](mailto:sothebymews@gmail.com) NIGEL WILLIAMS

# My Visit to Islington Foodbank

Following the article on Foodbanks in the November 2013 issue of Highbury Community News, in January I paid a visit to the Trussell Trust's Islington site at York House, 207-21 Pentonville Rd., N.1., the Kings Cross end of the road. I had never seen a foodbank before and was curious to know what the atmosphere was like and how it worked. My interest was especially sharpened by the relative newness of the foodbank phenomenon in modern society: not since the Depression years of the 1930s has there been anything resembling it.

The foodbank occupies the ground floor and part of the first floor of York House, which is a fairly new building. The Foodbank area is administered by Kings Cross Church and is open two days each week. When I arrived a volunteer greeted me and showed me into the dining area, where clients show their vouchers to indicate their eligibility for collecting food. The area was bright with plenty of daylight; modern and simple in design and furnishings. There were some cheery flowers on the tables and newspapers to read. The atmosphere was quiet and restful, clearly aimed at setting clients at their ease. While people wait to be taken to the food storage area, they are offered hot beverages, fruit juice and cake. I was given a piece of cake and it was delicious!

Talking to some of the volunteers in the reception area I learned that they work on a rota system, each one usually attending once a month, more on Saturdays than on Mondays. The Foodbank is staffed entirely by volunteers, who come from various churches and different backgrounds. Many clients need the Foodbank because of delays in benefit payments, leaving them little or no money to buy food. Client numbers vary, in busy weeks totalling about forty, with more in the winter than at other times. Overall, the number of people needing help has doubled over the past year.

Being taken into the food storage area on the first floor, I found myself in a very large room containing a huge number of plastic crates packed with tinned food. One of the volunteers told me that 1,500 kilos of food goes out monthly—hence the constant requirement for more food donations, which come entirely from individual donors. Specific arrangements are made for people who have special dietary requirements, influencing what foods go into which crates. If you would like to contribute please refer to the 'Shopping List' provided by the Trussell Trust.

All in all, it was abundantly clear that the Foodbank performs an absolutely vital and thoughtful service to many people in our borough and does its very best to make clients feel welcome and at ease.

TOM RUBENS

## Shopping List

**M**ilk (UHT or powdered), Sugar (500g), Fruit juice (carton), Soup, Pasta sauces, Sponge pudding (tinned), Tomatoes (tinned), Cereals, Rice pudding (tinned), Tea Bags/instant coffee, Instant mash potato, Rice/pasta, Tinned meat/fish, Tinned fruit, Jam, Biscuits or snack bars.



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## HCA News • No 86 • April 2014



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# Living with Type 2 Diabetes without medication

It is eight years now since I wrote about being diagnosed with prostate cancer and the satisfactory results of the operation to remove my prostate. The side effects left me with bladder incontinence that was eventually solved in 2011 by the insertion of an AMS 800, details of which I wrote about in the February 2012 issue of Highbury Community News.

Since then I thought I was pretty healthy for a 75 year old; that is until I went to the Gillespie Park Festival on the 6th September 2013. The NHS had a tent there and one of the nurses invited me to come in to answer a series of questions, have my blood



pressure and some blood taken. In less than 48 hours I was contacted by my GP's surgery, The Miller Practice, as my blood sugar level was high and I was sent for a glucose tolerance test at the Whittington. At my next appointment with Dr Brand I learned that I am a Type 2 Diabetic.

We discussed my lifestyle - pretty good, apart from not enough exercise - but weighing in at 89kgs (14 stone 3 lbs) I was told I must walk whenever possible and lose weight. I was offered a DESMOND Day (Diabetes Education and Self Management for Ongoing and Newly Diagnosed) at the Camden Road Primary Care Centre, which I attended with twelve others and was very informative. Over the course of the eight hour day we were told all about Type 2 Diabetes - the increased likelihood of heart attack and stroke, the need to have regular eye tests to check for glaucoma and to tickle your toes to ensure there is no loss of feeling. We learned about suitable foods and foods to avoid - particularly products containing sugar. The symptoms of Type 2 to be

aware of are: wounds that are slow to heal, feeling thirsty, repeated infections, tiredness, blurred vision and erectile dysfunction; although in this last case, and all of us being of a certain age agreed that we probably preferred a good cup of tea! The day flew by.



Having learned that the best way to possibly avoid medication was to get more exercise and lose weight I bought a static exercise bike and a pedometer. I now cycle up to five miles a day and walk almost everywhere. On the

recommendation of several friends I also bought Michael Mosley's The Fast Diet. Mosley was diagnosed with Type 2 Diabetes and his blood sugar level, weight and height were almost the same as mine. After three months on his own diet he brought his blood sugar level to 5. So, two days of my week are now "fast" days" which means two meals a day that in total don't exceed 600 calories. I have found this very easy and rarely have hunger pangs. On the other five days you can eat what you want. I have just had a second blood test and my blood sugar level is 5.5 and my weight was down to 81.5 kg (12 stone 11 lbs). So, although they say that once a diabetic always a diabetic, with my current lifestyle I should be able to avoid diabetic medication. Increasing numbers of people are now prone to diabetes and early diagnosis is really important, so if you are overweight, take little exercise and display symptoms of Type 2 Diabetes as listed above, I'd recommend having a check-up with your GP.



DAVID FENTON