



# HIGHBURY COMMUNITY NEWS

FROM THE HIGHBURY COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION

## Islington tree policy: or how to insult people's intelligence in two easy pages

The long-awaited update to the Tree Policy for Islington, last issued in 2002 and consulted upon at the close of 2009, has been adopted by the council this January. Instead of a document generally expected to be fifty-odd pages long, giving aims, objectives and a run-down of current national policies to which its policies relate, the Tree Policy 2011 fits on two sides of A4,

A series of bullet point statements is heralded by Paul Smith, Councillor with responsibility for environmental matters, saying, "We're on the side of residents and committed to protecting and preserving Islington's trees in a practical, common sense way. . . we're providing a two-page plain English guide, with 15 easy-to-follow bullet points that tell you everything you need to know about tree protection."

Well, almost. Saving there was nothing about the whys and wherefores of the policy statements, their aims and objectives, how they sit with regional or national policies or any description at all of how the council's policies on trees will be put into practice. We looked, for instance, at how residents would be informed about trees that the council wishes to cut down for whatever reason - nothing there. However, when confronted with this

gap in policy at the Executive meeting that adopted the new Tree Policy, Councillor Smith was open to our request for a policy that informs residents in advance of a tree being earmarked for felling, and he has undertaken to reinstate this long-standing element of policy.

Also, a major criticism of the draft Tree Policy that HCA made during the consultation has been covered by a statement in the Tree Policy now adopted that: "Healthy mature trees will not be removed to create space to plant new trees". So there will be no felling of older trees under the banner of pre-emptive felling and replanting with different species in the hope of coping with climate change and the possible, however unlikely, event of new and devastating pathogens attacking

and killing our trees.

We are still very dissatisfied that the new Tree Policy does nothing more than list its policies in quite a cryptic way and we will be seeking publication of information about the way in which the council sees its policies being put into practice. Consequently, as a resource, we will maintain on our website for anyone who has an interest in local trees, all the documents from the 2002 Policy onwards, including what is generally considered as a model policy of twenty pages, produced by the City of Newcastle which has won an award for its environmental practice. Do look on our website and let us know you views. Website: [www.highburycommunity.org](http://www.highburycommunity.org) , email: [hcanews@hotmail.com](mailto:hcanews@hotmail.com)  
ROBIN HULL

### HCA AGM 2 April 2011

The 2011 HCA AGM will start at 7.15pm on Saturday 2 April. It will be held at Christ Church Highbury, at the top of Highbury Fields.

Further information will be sent to those on our mailing list. Anyone not on our mailing list who wishes to attend should send an email putting 'AGM enquiry' in the subject line to: [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) or write to PO Box 43396, N5 9AD.

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

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*Michelle and her colleagues offer all customers  
a very warm welcome.*

## Why we mustn't lose Sotheby Mews Day Centre for the elderly

The site at Sotheby Mews in Sotheby Rd, N5, may cease to be a Day Centre for the elderly.

The Day Centre is managed on behalf of Islington Council by Age Concern, and offers a wide range of activities to people aged over 60 years old.

Islington Age Concern says it deeply regrets the possible closure of the Centre, but, without Council funding, will be unable to keep it open. Because a large number of clients come to do keep-fit activities, it may be possible to provide other venues for this in the Borough. Alternative venues of a different kind are being considered for physically frailer clients. A general consultation on these options will soon be started by the Council, and a decision on funding issued.

There have been accusations that the site has been valued at £1 million and that the real motivation for closure of the Centre is financial through development of housing on the site.

The loss that closure of the Centre would entail to current and potential users is clear from what Joyce Smith told HCA's Tom Rubens when he recently interviewed her at her home near the Centre.

**TR:** How long have you been attending the Centre?

**J.S:** About 15 years.

**TR:** What benefits and pleasures does it provide?

**J.S:** 90% of my pleasures! Painting—I first began painting at the Centre at age 70, after retirement from my job at age 69. I've since produced 50-60 paintings, and some are here on the walls (these, in the interviewer's opinion, are of high quality). I did a creative writing class, and I now attend a poetry group. I've had a poem in "Ever Active," a magazine on physical activities for the elderly, and one in a magazine published by Claremont Day Centre at the Angel, Islington. I also write short stories. And I go to a drama class.

**TR:** What would your life be like without the Centre?

**J.S:** If it weren't for Sotheby Mews, I wouldn't be the person I am today. I don't know what I'm going to do if it closes. It would be terrible for me. I had a letter published on the issue of closure in "The Islington Tribune" in September this year.

**TR:** How many other people feel the way you do about the Centre?

**J.S:** A lot. A number of people are lonely, have lost their partners, and don't have family nearby. If it weren't for the Centre, they wouldn't meet people at all. They could become seriously depressed and in need of medical help.

We urge all residents in Highbury to support the Centre - we have many lonely and vulnerable senior people in our area who need this kind of support. To find out how you can help, by lobbying the Council and in other practical ways, please contact the Day Centre team:

Sotheby Road, N5 2UT

Telephone: 020 7226 1421

Fax: 020 7359 5269

Email: sotheby@acislington.org.uk

Islington Council has a web page for the Centre. It gives the same number for fax and telephone and as of 22 January 2011 the link to the Centre web site did not work.

The Age Concern web pages for the Sotheby Centre can be found at:

<http://www.acislington.org.uk/index.cfm?id=5319>

# Highbury Roundhouse - Latest!

**On the 12th January the Highbury Roundhouse received some good news. We haven't had too much of that recently.**

If you're not familiar with what we do, here are a few basics. The Roundhouse was founded in 1974 as a Youth Club for disaffected young people. We've grown since then. The site, provided by the GLC, was a former 'Bottleworks' factory, to which was added the house at 71, Ronalds Road. When the GLC was abolished in 1986, the site was transferred to LBI, with a restrictive covenant requiring that it be used for a community centre.

For nearly forty years that's what we've been. We run activities for under 5s, after-school clubs and holiday play schemes. We still have a thriving Youth Club. You'll find a range of dance, drama and music groups for all ages, classes in Karate, Pilates, Zen meditation sessions, two lunch and social clubs for the elderly. This newsletter is printed in the Roundhouse office, after we gave a home to the HCA printer. Hundreds of people pass through our doors every week. We're not just a community centre, we're at the centre of the community.

Highbury Roundhouse is a non-profit making company and a Registered Charity with an annual turnover of around £340,000. As an organisation, we receive no core funding from the LBI, but they contribute £94,000 per annum to pay for some of the services we deliver to the local community. The remainder of our income is derived from user-group fees, lettings, fundraising and donations. A very significant proportion of this income comes from the hall, dance studio, IT suite, youth club and kitchen facilities that comprise the back building.

Closing that back building was a devastating blow. In August, after ten years of failing to do any maintenance, council officers wheeled in the District Surveyor, who declared the building unsafe. Our operations were dispersed over six different sites and we've been working against the clock to prevent demolition.

We secured the services of The Morton Partnership, one of the most eminent firms of structural engineers in the country - they're currently working on Westminster Abbey. Brian Morton was highly critical of the council's record and procedure. He met council officers in December but his arguments were disregarded.

However - the officers' conduct at that meeting had been so irregular that elected Councillors stepped in and ordered a re-run.

That took place on the 12th. This time Morton was listened to. The District Surveyor agreed that the building was not in imminent danger of collapse and didn't need to be demolished. Morton proposed repair measures which could be accomplished easily and cheaply. The DS agreed that these, if implemented, would enable the closure notice to be lifted.

The story isn't over yet. We're still fighting for the building to be repaired and trying to secure a binding agreement for the centre's long-term survival. Please help us. Sign our on-line petition at [www.savehighburyroundhouse.co.uk](http://www.savehighburyroundhouse.co.uk) If you've already signed, then please ask your friends to sign.

TONY MILLER  
Secretary to the Highbury Roundhouse

NEW:

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E-mail: [denisebyrne@english11and13plus.net](mailto:denisebyrne@english11and13plus.net)

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# Gillespie Park and Ecology Centre under threat

A shock was in wait after the Christmas break with the discovery that major changes are planned for Gillespie Park. In particular, Peter Howarth, Richard Meyers and other staff members at the Ecology Centre will be losing their jobs under the plans, and activities at the Ecology Centre will be drastically curtailed.

David Braine, who is one of the Friends of Gillespie Park of over 20 years standing said: "It saddens me that the future viability of the Park and Centre could be threatened so. Gillespie Park has been fantastically served by Peter, Richard et al for many years. Their commitment to the Park and willingness to promote activities, eg talks, walks, Gillespie Festival, supervising volunteers including myself, as well as their park maintenance duties has always been exemplary. I would argue their salaries are paid for many times over in the value they give to Islington Council Tax payers and

residents."

While it is true that the Council, is facing large cuts due to the funding restrictions as a result of Government policy, Gillespie Park is one of Islington's 'jewels in the crown' and therefore it deserves special consideration for protection. The sums of money the Council intends to be saved by drastically cutting back at the Park are minuscule compared to the overall budget cuts. The loss of goodwill amongst local people if these proposals re implemented could be considerable.

The following need to be addressed by the Council, in particular Councillors Hull, Debono & Greening:

**Who will supervise the Thursday volunteers?** There are 10 volunteers, who under Richard and Peter's supervision, carry out various maintenance activities in the Park and the Parkland Walk, which over the course of the year saves the

Council thousands of pounds by not employing contractors to do the work.

**Is there a future for the Gillespie Park Festival?** Richard is instrumental in making sure that the Friends get the support needed to mount the Festival. This year will be the 25th and could quite possibly be the last one as key volunteers will not be prepared to take on the responsibility for it without Council Staff assistance.

**Does the Ecology Centre have a future and if not what will happen to it?** The Friends use the Centre to raise money for the Festival several times a year by organising very successful quiz nights, talks by local naturalists, music nights (Summer Solstice) etc. These events could all be lost, in fact The Friends would cease to have a function and would probably disband after over 25 years of continuous existence.

**Who will be responsible for maintaining and patrolling the park?** HCA urges the Council to think again about these misguided proposals for the sake of present and future users of Gillespie Park.

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## Islington's Proposed Changes to Parking Regulations: bad for the residents, bad for the environment

At the beginning of the year the Council proposed three changes aimed at making parking simpler and easier. These were:

### 1. The Residents' Roamer

Residents would have more freedom to park near shops and visit friends in the borough during the day. From 31 January 2011, if you had an Islington resident parking permit, you would be able to park in resident permit bays in any controlled zone in the borough between 10am and 2pm.

### 2. Unlimited visitor parking vouchers

There would no longer be a limit on the number of visitors' parking vouchers you can buy each year.

**3. Reduced parking bay suspension costs** The cost of short-term parking bay suspensions have been reduced, so it will now be cheaper for you to reserve a space outside your home for a removal van or skip.

I objected to these proposals on three grounds:

1. Elfort Road, where I live, is in zone G where the restricted hours are 10am to 2pm daily. Therefore this zone could become the free Arsenal Station car park for anyone resident in Islington. It could also provide free parking for any employees at the Emirates who live in the borough or for

customers at the Arsenal shop. All this would be to the detriment of residents and their genuine visitors, carers, tradespeople, etc.

2. The Residents' Roamer, although of benefit to a few less mobile people, could encourage lazier people to drive to the shops, doctors, dentists, etc. This would not be good for the environment. The borough should be encouraging walking and cycling, not car usage!

3. The withdrawal of the limit on number of visitor vouchers may encourage a trade in these, which would have a particular effect on streets near the Emirates Stadium. A local school offers match day parking at £20 per day, so a voucher at £10 or £15 would be a

good deal. I am sure that a request for 500 vouchers would be queried but the odd 10 or 20 would probably go unnoticed and could cause more problems for residents and their genuine visitors on match days.

The HCA and many other residents objected for broadly similar reasons. The Council have now agreed to amend the roaming times to 11am to 3pm, which meets some of our concerns and to monitor issue and use of visitor vouchers. The encouragement of driving and its potential to create problems for residents near retail areas, doctors' surgeries, etc remains an issue which will need to be monitored closely.  
JOHN EGAN

# Bailey Brothers Bookbinders: a Highbury business

**Needing a book bound, I realised there was a Bindery almost next door to me; I met Ian Bailey who told me the story of the family firm.**

Ian's great grandfather went prospecting in the Australian gold rush, sending money to London to found a Bible bookshop in Holloway Road in 1880. Repair and rebinding became more profitable than the bookshop and as the gold rush continued, land on the corner of Ronalds Road and Horsell Road, N5, was purchased and an imposing building was erected in 1895, in keeping with the new residential housing, its walls decorated with many moulded terracotta tiles. Highbury, then, was finishing off that transformation from farmland to terrace housing that saw the council of the time save the last undeveloped land to create Highbury Fields.

Cambridge University Press sent printed sheets for folding and binding. Two hundred staff at Bailey Brothers Bookbinders turned out two million Bibles a year and, for the troops after the start of war in 1914, a miniature prayer book with a magnifying glass in the cover. Machines were powered by pulleys on the ceilings. Staff specialised in particular aspects of the trade - the gilders were the highest paid and most respected, wore shiny shoes and bowler hats; apprentices paid for their training and did a full seven years.

In 1945, demobbed from the Navy, Alex, Rae and Neil were the third generation running Bailey Brothers. Dramatic changes were afoot; binderies failed as book technology changed and old-fashioned machinery needed updating. Alex bought several binderies and changed the name to Bookbinders of London in the '70s, but general decline continued and certain failure loomed unless they could re-equip and find new markets. A large council grant covered refurbishment and conversion of much of the building into thirty-five small business units for tenants, and survival was ensured. Beside the building, where two horses and carts that delivered books over a hundred years ago were stabled, one of the latest tenants, Farm Direct, offers meat and veg over the internet.

The digital challenge continues for Ian and, recently, Simon, the fourth generation brothers. Family pressure during the Falklands war turned Ian from joining the marines into learning his trade at the London College of Printing, starting to run the company in 1981. It's looking good for the bindery: "Whilst we needed to maintain the 'tailored craft' feel of our end products, we had to move with the times which were heading toward shorter runs, quicker turnarounds and on-demand book binding," says



Ian. Instead of steady work from one or two clients, the new emphasis is on thousands of individuals - sometimes the work revolves entirely around binding student theses; many students who need a 'just-in-time' service, email their thesis and have it printed and bound within an hour.

Ian is aiming to grow the company again using the new flexibility the company offers in the internet era; he sees the printing of photobooks as a coming thing. Many people want family and

holiday photos in book form and the company makes one or more copies using the latest, very expensive machinery that only became a possibility by using the original building as a resource.

Contact: [www.bookbindersoflondon.com](http://www.bookbindersoflondon.com) and [www.thephotobookstore.com](http://www.thephotobookstore.com)

ROBIN HULL

## A delicious lesser-known and easy corned beef recipe

When I was buying some corned beef recently Kate, one of the staff at Frank Godfrey butchers, passed on a recipe with which I am not familiar - so with her permission, I thought I would include it here.

You need:

450g corned beef;  
1 green pepper diced up very small;  
1 tin of chopped tomatoes;  
A hint of freshly-milled black pepper (to taste);  
2-4 servings of rice (already cooked).

Put the corned beef in a saucepan, and break it up once you have turned on the heat. Add the tomatoes and chopped green pepper, as well as the freshly milled black pepper. Simmer for twenty minutes, then serve with the boiled rice.

If you have an unusual recipe you would like to pass on, send it to me c/o: [hcanews@hotmail.com](mailto:hcanews@hotmail.com)

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## HC News • No 70 • January 2011

### STOP PRESS: Waxwings in Drayton Park

On Friday and Saturday January 14th and 15th a flock of 75 waxwings were seen in Drayton Park eating the rowan berries on the trees opposite the Arsenal shop. These spectacularly exotic-looking birds are winter migrants from Scandinavia and are rarely seen in London. Their name derives from the sealing-wax-red tips to their wing feathers. They may be around for a few more days.  
GILL SHEPHERD



*(Picture taken, with permission, from the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds - RSPB - website)*

### Spice up your life, join the HCA committee!

HCA needs two or three more committee members. Do you have a few hours to spare every month or so? We are currently under-represented in Finsbury Park and Highbury East, but would welcome members from anywhere in the area who are keen to be involved in the local community.

Do you like arranging social events, are you good at admin., do you like helping to produce newsletters? There is something for everyone. Please email [hcanews@hotmail.com](mailto:hcanews@hotmail.com), or write to the PO Box if you are interested and someone will get back to you.

### Nightshelter in Highbury on Fridays

After a second year with an early start to the winter marked by sub-zero temperatures and snow, the attractions of the 'deep and crisp and even' have already worn a little thin for many of us, but we have warm comfortable homes to which we can retreat. The homeless do not have that comfort, but are faced with managing to stay alive as best they can in temperatures which are potentially lethal even in a large city like London.

The Islington Nightshelter scheme is again setting out to provide the homeless with somewhere to stay, and Christ Church Highbury, the church at the top of Highbury Fields, is participating as usual.

For the months January to March, Christ Church joins with other Islington churches to offer a bed, evening meal and breakfast to homeless people. Each church is responsible for one night per week and Christ Church's night is Friday.

Christ Church runs its Nightshelter in the church rooms right until the end of March. On offer to the homeless are a good dinner, a warm place to sleep, a hearty breakfast and companionship.

This is a valuable support to the vulnerable of Islington. Why not participate, by helping on Friday nights (cooking, serving, washing up, and talking to the guests), or by donating food and any good quality clean bedding you might spare?

The service is provided by volunteers from the church and the community. If you would like further information or to volunteer please contact Jackie Mair by email: [jlamair@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:jlamair@hotmail.co.uk)