

HIGHBURY COMMUNITY NEWS

www.highburycommunity.org

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English fare with Italian flair By David Fenton

If you live in Highbury there are many good places to eat; but if you haven't yet visited San Daniele del Friuli then put it at the top of your list.

Obviously San Daniele is an Italian Restaurant; but that's only half the story. The Fossaluzza brothers, Marco & Franco, own the business and run it as a typical family restaurant. On a Friday or a Saturday evening there are often three generations of a family, often Italian, enjoying an early meal – but later there are young couples, older couples, small groups, all out to enjoy themselves and, of course, football fans (well behaved). But don't forget that at lunchtime during the week it is an ideal spot for a business lunch or just a quick snack.

The important part is, of course, the food and here you get the best of all possible worlds. You can have a meal for as little as £5 or go to town and spend £30+ because the menu caters for your every need – Pizzas and Pastas prepared while you eat a wide range of starters.

Every night there are meat and fish dishes to choose from - all with a hint of Italy; but also in the winter and spring Marco and Franco have a contact in Suffolk, through their cousin Roberto, who provides pheasant, partridge and rabbit. Their chef also enjoys the country life and you will often find hare



on the menu. All these typically English dishes are cooked with Italian flair.

There is a good selection of wine, much of it coming from the Fossaluzzas' home region in Italy – Friuli. So, if you are planning a holiday to northern Italy or to Venice, why not do as we did and visit the Friuli region of Italy and taste the wine and eat the San Daniele ham – in my opinion sweeter and better than Parma? You could even become a supporter of the Udinese football club in Serie A of the Italian league (and doing well). Talking of football, San Daniele del Friuli is the restaurant chosen on match days by the Arsenal football club.

If you gaze around the walls you will see the works of local artist Derek Whitehead that include watercolours, pen & ink drawings, mosaics and ceramics. ■

San Daniele del Friuli Restaurant
72 Highbury Park, N5 2XE
Tel: 020 7359 0341

[Illustration by Derek Whitehead]

HCA AGM & Party

Over 80 people talked, ate and partied on 16th April at the HCA's annual event. Questions were put to candidates for the local elections [Labour, Local Freedom and Conservative] and local issues were discussed. Peter Powell, local historian, then regaled the meeting with colourful stories from his varied life.

An astonishing £625 was raised for the *Saving Faces* charity in the raffle and auction afterwards. HCA thanks all who bought tickets and bid for prizes. A very warm thanks goes to our local shop-keepers who so generously donated the bulk of the prizes; and to all those who contributed to the food, which was generally judged to have exceeded its usual high standards.



BRUCE TATTERSALL SKILFULLY AUCTIONS THE PRIZES AT THE AGM

Highbury Stadium redevelopment

By Rowan Howard

Whilst the old Arsenal stadium is being redeveloped, 60,000 "lorry movements" will take place. That means 60,000 lorries entering and leaving Highbury, carrying in materials and carrying out spoil from the new car park. Every one of those lorries will be using an agreed route, entering and leaving Highbury via the Drayton Park/Holloway Road junction. That is a cause for concern for "Keep Islington Connected", the local community campaign that was set up last year in response to the temporary road closures at Benwell and Bryantwood Roads.

We learnt, when both Benwell and Bryantwood Roads were temporarily closed, that it takes very few extra vehicles turning right into Holloway Road from Drayton Park to cause traffic chaos. Lorries are the biggest bugbear as they have to block the junction to make the turn. The concern is that we will see more of that chaos once the construction vehicles (from the Highbury Stadium redevelopment and the other new residential developments along Drayton Park) start to use this junction to enter and leave the area.


With Bryantwood Road currently remaining temporarily closed, light vehicle traffic heading northwards towards the Nags Head shopping centre and Hornsey Road has to travel almost to the Drayton Park junction to access Benwell Road. Once queues build, dangerous driving results, cars driving on the wrong side of the road to jump the queues being a prime example. This is bad for all road users: pedestrians and cyclists as well as drivers. Local residents, who are already bearing the brunt of the re-development, suffer further.

On 7th July, Islington's East Area Committee will be deciding whether to make the closure of Bryantwood Road permanent, after 16 months of temporary closure. The agenda item will be discussed at a time when traffic in the Drayton Park area is the lightest it is likely to be. Hornsey Road is closed southbound, the old stadium redevelopment is not yet underway and the thousands of expected new residents of the area are yet to move in and start using the streets as pedestrians, cyclists and drivers.

KICC will be pressing traffic officers and local councillors:

- *not to make a decision without proper consultation with residents in the wider area*
- *to offer the re-opening and traffic calming of Bryantwood Road as an option to residents (which has not been offered to date)*
- *to take the anticipated construction traffic, and traffic resulting from the hugely increased numbers of new residents, into account when deciding whether to allow Bryantwood Road to remain closed.*

..... and we shall remind them of those 60,000 "lorry movements". ▣



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Events

Islington Greenspace manages a full and varied programme throughout the borough. Upcoming highlights in the Highbury area include a continuing series of Tuesday evening talks on Botany at the Ecology Centre. Tuesdays 6.30-8.00pm through to 28th July. Free. For details phone **7354 5162**.

Also you could join The Friends of Gillespie Park for a summer solstice celebration on Saturday 18th June from 6-10pm.

From 27th June to 3rd July the Moscow State Circus presents a brand new production on Highbury Fields. Box office **07030 150 150**

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What a load of bollards!

Explaining the expensive alterations to the Drayton Park/Benwell Road junction, thought to have cost around £80,000, Islington traffic engineers claimed they *"will slow traffic entering and exiting Benwell Road and provide a safer crossing point for pedestrians.... These changes will assist vehicles turning from Drayton Park into Benwell Road.... By the introduction of the above features the London Borough of Islington hopes to create a better environment for all users of the Benwell Road area."*

So, how come the traffic island atop the new, raised-table pedestrian crossing was totally destroyed twice in the first three weeks of operation? Fortunately there were no pedestrians around on either occasion vehicles got caught out by this fiendishly deceptive piece of engineering.



These *"improvements"* were a direct consequence of the temporary closure of Bryantwood Road, for which councillors voted after being told by these same engineers that the Council did not have £15,000 to put 5 humps in Bryantwood Road. ■

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Tiger Lil is home!

A much relieved and happy Tiger Lil has been found following the publication of her photo and a plea for HCA members' help to find her, in the January Issue of Highbury Community News. Tiger Lil disappeared on 23rd September 2004 from her home with Sally Bradshaw, the professional classical soprano, who was featured in a *Why Highbury?* section of HC News recently. Her unexplained disappearance caused Sally much grief and distress and she is still celebrating the miraculous return on 11th April this year.

"The owners of Andrews' Drycleaners discovered her one morning crying outside their back door and let her in and came and fetched me immediately. They knew about her because of your newsletter and so it is thanks

to HCA as well as to them that she was rehomed so quickly back to me...thanks! They thought they recognised her from the photo."

Sally Bradshaw had a strong feeling that Tiger Lil had been catnapped for all those months and says *"I asked Sandra, a cat expert, and she said that she was sure she had been catnapped. She had clearly been kept indoors and was well and clean and fed - but showing signs of 'caged stress' like pacing up and down; and for the first couple of days she growled when picked up."*

Tiger Lil is an extremely feisty, independent cat that loves the freedom Sally gives her to go in and out of her home whenever she wants. Sally says "Being kept indoors will have been very distressing for her and must have made her very anxious. She soon recovered, however, and is behaving quite normally again. I still can't quite believe she

is back with me - it is really strange and magical." ■



TIGER LIL POSES BY HER FAVOURITE FLOWERS

Dealing with local concerns

By Cllr Richard Greening

One of the most important issues which councillors deal with is approving planning applications. Since Highbury Stadium and the new Emirates stadium within our ward, I have been working with my fellow ward councillors, Theresa Debono and Adrian Pulham, to respond to the concerns of the many people affected by the developments both planned and in progress.

Most politicians' attitude towards Arsenal FC is governed by the fact that the club is very popular and successful; and this is certainly true of the current administration in the Town Hall. Sadly, they believe that being on the club's side means no word of criticism of any aspect of the developments should be uttered by a LibDem councillor. All AFC planning applications are heard by the obscure Corporate Services Committee at the Town Hall, instead of at the East Area Planning committee, which meets locally, in case local residents might turn up and criticise the new plans.

It is our job to stand up for local people affected by these developments, whether they are affected by noise, dust and subsidence during the building works, or by a loss of TV reception caused by new buildings; or are concerned about the failure to deliver community benefits promised years ago; or the potential impact of the radically revised plans for Highbury Stadium. These new plans are causing particular concern because 160 new homes are being added to the site, by replacing the previous mixture of property sizes with smaller one and two bedroom flats and cutting out a great deal of the affordable housing which would have gone to local people and key workers like nurses and the police.

Essentially the changes amount to more cars and fewer children. There is understandable concern about the impact of these extra cars on local streets. There is also concern about the impact on Highbury Stadium's neighbours. For instance at Aubert

Court, there was to be a new development replacing the South Stand which would have faced the maisonettes. This has been replaced by a proposed development which looks inward and whose building line is significantly closer to Aubert Court. We are also told that redeveloping Highbury Stadium is to be extended to four (!) years.

One of the other jobs councillors do is to deal with complaints about housing, particularly from families living in poor or overcrowded housing. While the Labour government's investment programme is now beginning to deal with the backlog of repairs to council housing, it has not paid enough attention to increasing the supply of homes which ordinary people can afford. One of the most difficult jobs councillors have to do is telling families who are severely overcrowded that we can't help them. It is for this reason that the removal of affordable housing from the Highbury Stadium is so disappointing.

We have called a public meeting at 7.30pm on 16th June at St Thomas's Church Hall on Monsell Rd. This will provide a chance for people affected by the development to express their concerns and enable us to plan how best to lobby the Corporate Services Committee, which will meet at the Town Hall on 30th June to decide on the planning application.

If you would like to speak to one of us, we can be contacted via the Labour Group office at the Town Hall (020 7527 3214) or at one of our regular surgeries. ■

Surgery details:

1st Wednesday of each month 6:30pm to 7:30pm at Elizabeth House, Hurlock Street.

2nd Saturday of each month at Hind House on the Harvist Estate from 10am to 11:30am

3rd Saturday of each month at Stevens Ink Community Room, Tannington Terrace (off Gillespie Rd) from 10am to 11:30am

Open meeting on Highbury Square development

Following the refusal of the Town Hall to arrange a public meeting on the grounds that it was "not the most suitable forum" the local Labour Party is convening an open meeting to examine and discuss the radical redesign of the Highbury Stadium redevelopment.

This will take place on **Thursday 16th June at 7.30 at St. Thomas's Church Hall, St.Thomas's Road.** The Revd Stephen Coles will take the chair and MP, Jeremy Corbyn, will attend, as will Highbury West Councillors.

The organisers have invited the Council's planning officers to give them a chance to explain the alterations and to consult residents on the new Arsenal planning application; but it is not known if they will attend.

Chief Planner Graham Loveland wrote to HCA saying he was satisfied that a report yet to be received from Arsenal's advisors on the results of their exhibition, together with press coverage, HCA's "campaigning" and individual letters received would be sufficient to guide officers in their recommendations when the plans go to Committee next month.

But residents have been fiercely critical of this innovative approach to consultation, in which the developer is asked to mount its own exhibition, receive comments from the public and report on its own proposals without any intervention or supervision by the Planning Authority

HCA member Chris Eisen described the exhibition as "pathetic and focused to meet Arsenal's needs." "There was no-one of any weight or substance to talk to", she complained, whilst noting that Arsenal's consultants were putting the blame on the Council for anything that seemed to be a problem with the plans.

To date HCA's "campaigning" on the subject has been confined to letting members know the outline proposals, a brief chat with a local paper, an informal call to the junior planner, plus two letters to Mr Loveland requesting a more extensive consultation. ■

Free dirt By Beatrice Sayers

A new composting project available to Highbury residents is up and running at Freightliners Farm.

Anyone living within (very roughly) a kilometre of the farm, in Sheringham Road, N7, can sign up to the project, elegantly dubbed *Free Dirt*. If you join the scheme, a special vehicle – electric-powered, of course – will come to your house on a regular basis to collect your garden waste, including all that hard-to-recycle woody stuff that can't be composted unless it has been mechanically shredded first. You need to book your collections a few days in advance, and pay the annual £25 individual membership fee. In return, you'll receive a free introductory bag of compost, to get your account started.

Membership also entitles you to a 10 per cent discount on all plants and vegetables for sale in the garden centre, products from the carpentry workshop and tickets to the City Farm Opera. Plus, you can purchase additional bags of compost, all made from locally produced waste, for £3.

Andrew Bernard, project manager of *Free Dirt*, points out that the scheme reduces the amount of waste going to landfill, returns nutrients to local soils and reduces the demand for non-sustainable composting materials. *"We're dealing with waste issues locally, we're supporting activities at the farm – we work with youth at risk and adults with disabilities – and we're producing high-quality compost, which isn't peat-based,"* he says.

Already, the scheme has members living as far south as the Angel and in roads north of Highbury Barn, and has even won a Community Composting Network award for being best in class in the soil conditioner category.

The benefit to the farm is that it is able to produce compost for its own needs for various gardening projects while supporting other gardeners as well. The scheme tries to have different types of compost available at any time for gardeners.

Composting takes place at the back of the farm, behind the

animal shed, in an area set aside for the process. All plant material to be composted is passed through a large chipper, sometimes more than once to break it down to the right consistency. It is then loaded into large, slatted wooden enclosures to hold the compost as it ferments. It gives out a surprising amount of heat as the micro-organisms get to work and turn the chopped up waste into useful stuff for the garden.

When the cost – including the environmental cost – of buying compost from garden centres is taken into account, this could be a green bargain for us all. And it shows, once again, that Freightliners Farm is much, much more than a place where people go to see sheep and goats. ■



ANDREW BERNARD WITH ELECTRIC VEHICLE

Advertising Banners for Drayton Park again?

The persistent developer aiming to cover the borough's lamp posts in vinyl advertising banners 7 foot high has taken a big step forward.

During the last eighteen months, numerous applications from Finsbury to Archway have been rejected by council officers using delegated powers; but at least one of them, the Drayton Park one, is going to the East Area Committee on 14th June.

This means that officers will be recommending approval for banners on most of the posts. It will be down to Ward Councillors to decide whether this is acceptable.

Unlike many proposals where there is legally little choice but to accept an application, there seems to be no reason (apart from money-grubbing) to accept this one. But planners will be scraping around for an excuse - expect to see some twaddle about *"enhancing the visual vibrancy of the streetscape in*

predominantly commercial areas" - and that at a time when Arsenal is about to build six-storey flats on all the vacant bits of Drayton Park that previously provided jobs.

What is the point of the Council's promises to get rid of unnecessary street-furniture? Is the aim simply to make way for more? ■

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Public Inquiry for Calabria Road masts

By Alice McAllister

It is almost exactly three years since a mobile phone base station was erected, without any prior warning or local consultation, and over a holiday weekend when many people were away, on the roof of the telephone exchange at 1-3 Highbury Grove. Soon after, we discovered that the base station was actually illegal, as it was too big to fall within permitted development. Since then, local residents have been campaigning to get the structure, which carries both 2 and 3G antennae, removed, but it has been a frustrating journey.

The telephone exchange is low-level, the highest point on the roof is only centimetres within the acceptable guidelines for structures of this size. As a result, powerful antennae have been placed 20 metres away from, and on a level with, bedrooms and living spaces of surrounding houses. Like most of Islington, this is a densely populated area, close to schools as well as homes. As well as making a massive visual impact, residents are concerned about the possible health risks - for two families, the mast was the catalyst for their moving out of the area. With the most recent government-funded Stewart Report still recommending a precautionary approach towards the siting of masts, we feel we have no option but to continue our fight. I have three young children, and am furious that they have no choice but be exposed to such new and unproven technology.

There have been some small victories. The leaseholders of the roof space, Crown Castle, applied to redesign the structure, saying it would reduce the visual intrusion. However, it would have meant antennae were placed even closer to homes, and local opposition meant permission was refused. In response, Crown Castle rebuilt the entire base station - it looks virtually identical, but does now fall within permitted development.

Enforcement Notices issued by Islington Council (and supported by residents) regarding the legality of the original mast, and to do with the Conservation Area status of the surrounding streets were countered by Crown Castle with appeals against planning decisions and requests for a Judicial Review. This was heard in the High Court, in the middle of May 2005. Much to residents' dismay, the Judge found in favour of Crown Castle and ruled that Islington Council was wrong to refuse planning permission, nor should Islington enforce removal of the structure. The Council is taking the case to Appeal. Residents now await a five-day Public Inquiry, originally scheduled to start on 21 June 2005, and hope that residents will be given the chance to represent themselves.

We are aware that mobile phone masts are here to stay. However, we insist that they should be sited sensitively, with minimum impact on the local environment, and, of course, with due regard paid to the concerns of local residents. ■

Contact: Alice McAllister, CaLiCo residents group, Calabria Road, N5
Email: aliceharry@aol.com

Public meeting on Arsenal's plans
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at

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Highbury Community Association

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