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## Feature p.8

Local entrepreneur  
Sashe Christopher  
honoured in list  
of inspirational  
female founders

By Elizabeth Atkin

## Feature p.9



Credit: Alok Chen/Unsplash

'Tiny Forest' near  
North Circular

## Feature p.10-11



The spy next door

**SOCIAL** WE'RE A  
**ENTERPRISE**  
BUSINESS WHERE SOCIETY PROFITS

How part of the Hendon Hub scheme could look when complete



## Hendon Hub plans win permission despite 1,000 objections

Planning permission granted for controversial scheme to provide student accommodation and facilities for Middlesex University

BY SIMON ALLIN, LOCAL  
DEMOCRACY REPORTER

**C**ontroversial plans to build hundreds of student homes and university facilities in Hendon have been approved despite fears they will have a "severe impact" on the area.

Tory councillors waved through the seven schemes which together form the Hendon Hub project – a major redevelopment of council-owned sites surrounding Middlesex University and The Burroughs in the civic heart of the town.

The Hendon Hub proposals, first revealed in an outline business case published in December 2020, include a plan to turn the Grade 2-listed Hendon Public Library – opened in 1929 and renovated in 2004 at a cost of more than £1million – into a business school for the university.

Barnet Council claims the project will "transform rundown buildings" and attract investment into the area. But it has faced significant opposition from residents, with 88% of people who responded to a consultation question saying they were against the initial Hendon

Hub plans. The council is also facing legal challenges to the scheme, including a claim that a document setting out planning guidance for the area is "unlawful" and has not been given enough scrutiny.

During the meeting of the strategic planning committee in January, residents lined up to condemn the proposals, which together sparked more than 1,000 written objections from the public. But despite the ongoing controversy, Conservative members of the committee voted in favour of all seven applications to redevelop the sites.

The approved schemes include plans to knock down the two-storey Ravensfield House and Fenella Building in The Burroughs and build 384 student flats in blocks up to seven stories high. The library service is set to be moved to the ground floor of one of the buildings.

Speaking during the meeting, local resident John Doherty said the proposals would have a "severe impact" on the area and claimed the council was not listening to concerns over the "absurd scale" of the buildings, "serious" transport

● Continued on Page-13





Barnet Post is the borough's free community newspaper: written by and for local people, giving you the chance to learn more about what is going on in your area and to read (and write) stories about what matters to you.

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Credit: Housing Care

# Care home needs £6m in repairs, report reveals

## Apthorp Care Centre was controversially closed last year

BY SIMON ALLIN, LOCAL DEMOCRACY REPORTER

**A** Barnet care home opened in 2004 and closed for maintenance earlier this year needs almost £6million of work to bring it up to standard.

Damaged ceilings and window frames, cracked pathways and leaking roofs are among the issues flagged up in a report into the condition of Apthorp Care Centre in Nurseryman's Road, Brunswick Park.

Five former residents have died following the closure of the home on 31st October, with maintenance works needed to upgrade fire safety systems. Barnet Unison and Barnet Alliance for Public Services have called for a public inquest into the closure and its impact on those who lived there.

The report by consultancy firm WSP, which is dated May 2021 and was obtained by a member of the public via a Freedom of Information request, reveals all the existing main electrical switchgear, fire alarm and nurse call equipment in the home is at or beyond its life expectancy.

Although the main heating plant was replaced "approximately a year ago", the report says the main pipework distribution has "evidence of leaks".

It also identifies electric cabling fixed with plastic clips and with no containment or fire stopping, along with stained

ceiling tiles, which according to the report "points to unclean ducts and lack of maintenance".

Further problems that need fixing are pathways with deteriorating surfaces, damaged window frames with failed double glazing, and leaks in the mezzanine roof. The report says the building "has experienced a considerable amount of water leaks in the past that have damaged ceilings".

The total bill for the issues affecting the home comes to £5.82m.

The report also states: "We did not see any on-site maintenance records when carrying out the survey. Due to the age and condition of the services installation and lack of on-site maintenance records, a comprehensive maintenance regime should be in place."

Barnet Council outsourced its care homes in 2001. Apthorp, set up to care for people with dementia, mental health conditions and physical disabilities, was sold to Catalyst Housing (then Ealing Family Housing Association) and run by a charity, The Fremantle Trust.

After being demolished and rebuilt, the care home was fully reopened in 2004. But it was brought back under the control of council care arm Your Choice Barnet in July 2019 after a damning report by the watchdog Care Quality Commission rated the home 'inadequate'.

Barnet Labour leader Barry

Rawlings said there were "questions to be asked about how Fremantle had allowed the building to get into such a condition".

Helen Davies, chair of Barnet Unison, also raised concerns over the report, asking who was carrying out and monitoring repairs at the home. She said "alarm bells" should have been raised following the discovery of legionella bacteria at the home in 2018.

The Fremantle Trust said all documents were transferred to Your Choice Barnet when it handed over the home in 2019 but made no further comment. Catalyst Housing was approached for comment but said responsibility for the building and its maintenance sits with Barnet Council.

Dawn Wakeling, the council's executive director for adult social care, said: "Barnet Council and our partners are committed to providing excellent care for the most vulnerable adults in the borough."

"We are investing an additional £16m over the next four years in new specialist facilities that will add extra capacity for more than 150 residents. We are expanding our care workforce and giving all the training and skills they need, and with four other North London councils, Barnet has secured £2m in funding to achieve this. The Proud to Care programme provides support to our highly valued carers and is recruiting many newcomers to our growing workforce."

## LETTERS

### Covid passports

Charles Batten, Edgware

**O**pposition to Covid passports was widespread amongst Conservative MPs, including Matthew Offord MP for Hendon who joined 98 other rebels in voting against the plans.

But Offord has not always taken such a stand against a move to what many Conservatives have called a "show your papers" society.

Indeed, he has said little on the dangerous proposals for mandatory voter ID which returned to parliament on 17th January, supporting the government's plans to require photo ID at polling stations.

These plans are a dangerous threat to democratic equality in the UK and, as groups like the Electoral Reform Society have shown, risk locking millions of legitimate voters out of our elections.

I hope Offord's recent concern for the risks of the increased use of ID extended to access to the ballot box – surely something we can all agree is more key to our rights than getting into a nightclub or large venue.

### New tech might have answers for NLWA waste

Rob Adamson, East Finchley

**I** was interested to read the article *Deal agreed to build new North London incinerator* in the January edition of the *Post*.

Mura technology for recycling plastic is being piloted in Teeside and appears to offer new possibilities of relevance to the NLWA to reduce the amount of plastic it burns.

I hope people within the NLWA will follow with interest the Teeside pilot plant and investigate the possibility of such a plant serving London either at Edmonton, (perhaps using power and heat from the planned incinerator) or within a modest distance. The Mura technology's ability to cope with mixed plastics and filler material is one of its strengths.

### Send us your letters

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## FEATURES | 4



Credit: Dimi Katsavaris/Unsplash

BY RESHMA HIRANI

# Identifying online threats isn't always easy

## Barnet Mencap are supporting those with learning disabilities to report hate crimes

Barnet Mencap's hate crime reporting project focuses on supporting people with learning disabilities and autism to report hate crimes to the Police. We have also received training from the charity Small Steps on online radicalisation and have found that people with disabilities who spend a lot of time online could be at risk.

In 2021 the Metropolitan Police recorded 762 racist and religious hate crimes in the borough of Barnet, but only 29 disability hate crimes in the same period. Despite increases in police recorded hate crime (which have been driven by improvements in crime recording and better identification of what constitutes a hate crime), disability hate crime reporting figures remain low.

Research shows that nine out of ten people with disability and/or mental health conditions have witnessed and/or experienced hate crimes. During the pandemic, we

saw a rise in online hate crime, including the hijacking of Zoom calls, video conferences and live-streamed religious or community services. There was also a reported rise in cyber abuse via social media platforms and gaming forums.

People with learning disabilities and autism are more at risk of being targeted because they are seen by perpetrators as vulnerable.

“**People with learning disabilities and autism are more at risk of being targeted**”

Social isolation, caused by a number of factors including anxiety or fear of integrating within a community, where they may encounter hate crime, can then lead to disabled people spending increased time online,

thus making them more accessible to perpetrators of cyber-abuse.

The workshops run by Small Steps have enabled our staff to learn about the signs of radicalisation and the risk of being contacted and engaged via gaming forums and online platforms. We have learnt that extremists will exploit vulnerable individuals desire to belong and offer easy solutions to the problems in the world.

Our continued partnerships with the Barnet Council Prevent team and with Small Steps aim to prevent people with learning disabilities and autism from becoming targets of extremism.

At the session with Small Steps, staff and carers helped clients to understand how to stay safe while using the internet by reporting any unwanted or unknown communications to their families or carers.

We will continue to raise awareness with the intention of ensuring that everyone in our community is safe from hate crime and extremism.

# “The far right can spread its message of hate anywhere”

Nigel Bromage founder of Small Steps speaks to Barnet Post about combatting far right extremism in our communities

BY BELLA SALTIEL

Nigel Bromage was indoctrinated into the far-right at the age of 15. A young boy in Birmingham with a mother dying from cancer, he was looking for community and an ideology to give life meaning. Far-right extremists offered him both.

Nigel's story has been featured in the Channel Four documentary *Leaving the Far Right After Being Radicalised Young* and he has spoken to the *Post* about his experiences.

Nigel said: “I joined in the early 1980s and, at the time, the IRA were just planting bomb after bomb it was always on the television. And somebody simply turned to my school gates, and handed me a leaflet which said: ‘if you think this is wrong, do something about it.’ And that was the open door that you know, took me on a journey for 20 years.”

The group turned out to be supportive of all sorts of racist ideologies. But, with the men in the group taking his mother to chemo appointments, and promising that “if we ban overseas aid, then all that money will be invested in the NHS and for me and my mum”, Nigel felt he had found a family. These “simple answers” are typical tactics used to recruit the vulnerable. Nigel says that when his mother died he just became “more angry” and started looking for even more extreme groups to join.

Nowadays, the internet makes it even easier for extremists to recruit. At Small Steps, Nigel has found that young people sometimes stumble onto the

wrong website, perhaps they have been taken in by a conspiracy theory about Covid, locked in their bedrooms feeling isolated from their community, and waiting on a chat forum will be “groomers” who provide simple answers to the big problems of the world.

Looking back on the time he spent in the far-right Nigel said he now, “feels sick at some of the things I was involved in.”

He continued: “but also as well, it makes me realise how easy that path is to go on. And I think it highlights how important it is that people are made aware of that journey. [It's] so easy with the internet, [so] it's really important to reduce extremism in any way we can, you know, whether that's just an individual, a family, a company, a media outlet, whatever it is.”

Extremists utilise social media to recruit and spread hateful messages, stirring up fear and discontent in the process.

There will always be new social media platforms to use, even if extremists get banned so Nigel says, “one of the things we say is we can't burn ourselves out with this problem. We've got to use education and compassion, to try and change people's mindsets.”

This is the foundation for all Small Steps actions. The charity is run by those who have had experience in the far-right and now provide training for local councils to help combat extremism in the community through education.

They also provide workshops for charities to identify the signs of extremism. Barnet Mencap recently participated in one of these workshops and have written about their experiences.





## FEATURES | 5

# A forest for the future

Mill Hill tree nursery will help adults and young people with health and social care needs



**S**weetTree Fields Farm in Mill Hill has won £4,500 funding from the Aviva Community Fund to build a dedicated tree nursery – with the trees destined to regenerate the seven-acre woodland on the site as well as other spaces within the community.

The farm is a specially-designed therapeutic environment that uses animals and nature to help those with support needs to learn new

skills and lead more healthy, active and independent lives.

The tree nursery area will be accessible to adults and young people with health and social care needs to help develop an understanding of trees and what it's like to work in a tree nursery, as well as learning about the importance of biodiversity. It is hoped some of those working on-site will move on to positions in nurseries in the community.

Robert Barnes, director of

SweetTree Farming for All, which uses the farm to support disadvantaged young people, said: "The funds will help our passionate team to acquire the initial tree stock and build the tree nursery area."

"As well as helping those we support, this project offers us a chance to make a very real impact on global warming through regenerating the woodlands. We will be making the trees grown available to local parks and other bodies as well. This is an incredible project that helps not only those with support needs but also the community at large."

Barry Sweetbaum, founder of South Hampstead-based SweetTree Home Care Services, which runs the farm, recognised the vital contributions that have helped the project to work.

"Thanks to Aviva, we have the funding needed to put the infrastructure in place and purchase the trees which we will plant and grow-on for transplanting into the woodland. We have also had endless support from Lawsons Builders in Whetstone throughout the development of the care farm and cannot thank them enough for their commitment to helping the farm

and those we serve."

Gemma Johnson, farm project manager, said: "It's a wonderful opportunity for our co-workers to engage in a project which addresses climate change."

"With huge thanks to Aviva, we now have the funds to take on another meaningful project like the tree nursery which until now was beyond our sights. I cannot think of any other environment where learning how to work in a tree nursery is on the course list for those with special needs. We feel very privileged to be able to introduce this as a new programme in 2022."

The Aviva Community Fund supports applications from projects which help to create a more sustainable future.

Paula Hall from Aviva said: "We've been running the Aviva Community Fund for over five years now and we're proud to have helped thousands of charities and good causes to make a difference across their communities within the UK."

"The SweetTree Fields Farm nursery is a fantastic example of the difference the Aviva Community Fund can make."

*ACP is the most important healthcare benefit you've never heard of*



Planning health care in advance has many benefits

BY YASMIN RAHMAN,  
HEALTHWATCH BARNET

**D**o you know what ACP is? ACP stands for Advance Care Planning, and it is one of the most important things you'll discuss with your GP.

Advance care planning conversations are held between patients – of any age – who may have significant health issues, and their family and healthcare professionals. They're to find out about people's future wishes and their care priorities.

However, timing can often stop people from having these important conversations. There are also cultural or religious taboos that make us unwilling to talk about the end of our lives. "I don't think the English are particularly good at talking about death" one Barnet resident said in a focus group about ACP, "I think there is enormous pressure on the family to keep someone going for as long as possible irrespective of the individual's dignity and wellbeing."

Due to the pandemic, we found too that people are also very conscious of the time pressures facing GPs and try to avoid taking up too much of their time.

In order to ensure that ACP conversations occur more easily, we'll be making a series of recommendations and setting out how these can be implemented. Changes will include steps to raise awareness of ACP; the creation of new print and other materials to let people consider the topic at their leisure, also thereby improving accessibility for those who are digitally excluded, hard of hearing or deaf. And, there'll be more work around making the system work for people as individuals.

If you'd like to share your thoughts and experiences with us, my email is [yasmin@healthwatchbarnet.co.uk](mailto:yasmin@healthwatchbarnet.co.uk).

## From Kenya to Barnet high-achieving Oshwals honoured for community work

**T**wenty-one members of the Oshwal community from around the world have been honoured for their achievements, including Binita Shah-Patel from Barnet.

Honours have been given for work in fields as varied as wildlife photography, charity work, commitment to LGBTIQ+, organ donation and the media, in the first-ever Oshwal Connect Global New Year Honours.

These high achievers have encouraged diversity, inclusion and equality in their respective fields and have been highlighted as inspirational peers to other members of the community.

Oshwal Connect was founded by cousins Bunty & Chaitan Shah in March 2021. The purpose of the

group was to unite, connect and highlight the Oshwal Community globally. While Oshwals are often Jain and Hindu in origin, this group goes beyond any political or religious affiliations.

Oshwals beginnings can be traced back as early as 457BC in India but are now based in many countries across the world. The earliest Oshwals recorded in the UK were in the 1950's.

Oshwal Connect has a primary presence on Facebook, where a group set up in the pandemic has seen accelerated organic growth with more than 7,000 members joining in the first nine months. The group is intergenerational but has a particularly active younger audience seeking to connect with others from their community.



The founders say: "We feel the success of growing the group is that we focused on creating a stronger united community by being more inclusive and open, by not involv-

ing religion and politics."

In Barnet, Binita Shah-Patel was recognised for her work with charities and good causes. Binny is a UN Women UK Delegate, an ambassador for World Animal Protection and has worked on several animal welfare campaigns. She also writes the blog Binnys Food and Travel.

Binny said: "I was extremely shocked, delighted and grateful to be awarded a New Year's Honour."

It has encouraged me to dedicate even more time working with causes and charities this year and I am determined to make a bigger impact and difference in 2022."

For more information:

Visit [binnysfoodandtravel.com](http://binnysfoodandtravel.com)  
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## NEWS | 6

Fewer than 50 staff had left employment or temporarily stopped working as they waited to receive their second dose, care homes reported

BY SIMON ALLIN, LOCAL DEMOCRACY REPORTER

**T**he roll-out of mandatory Covid jabs led some care home staff in Barnet to leave their roles – but many are now back at work.

After the government made it compulsory for staff to be double jabbed from 11th November, care homes in the borough reported that fewer than 50 staff had left employment or temporarily stopped working as they waited to receive their second dose.

Most of the staff who temporarily stopped working have now returned, which was described as a “significant achievement” in a report presented to the adults and safeguarding committee in January.

When mandatory vaccination regulations were published by the government in August, Barnet care



Credit Mufid Majnun / Unsplash

## Care home staff return following Covid jab rule

**145**  
Deaths in  
Barnet care  
homes linked  
to Covid-19

homes were reporting that 750 staff were not fully vaccinated.

Despite these reassuring figures, Lisa Rutter, Conservative councillor for Brunswick Park, raised concerns over staffing levels in one of the borough's care homes, where

she said nearly all the staff were off work after contracting Covid.

She told the meeting: “There are two managers, and they are working night and day trying to sort this.”

In response, Dawn Wakeling,

“  
*Barnet care homes were reporting that 750 staff were not fully vaccinated*  
”

executive director of adults and health, said people could still test positive for the virus despite being fully vaccinated. She added that the borough was experiencing “increased levels of Covid-positive status”, but this was linked to high transmission rates in the community – particularly of the Omicron variant – rather than vaccination status or infection control measures.

Between 1st January 2020 and 27th June 2021, there were 145 deaths in Barnet care homes linked to Covid-19, according to data published separately by the council. The figure represents 15.2% of all the deaths in Barnet attributed to the virus during this period.

The number of care home deaths related to the virus dropped significantly following the roll-out of the vaccine.

According to the council report, care homes updated their plans before the regulations came in to ensure service continuity would not be affected. To support this, the council set up a borough-wide recruitment campaign for the care sector and funded a £200 recruitment incentive payment for new entrants.

Efforts are now underway to ensure the wider social care sector is double jabbed ahead of a government deadline of 1st April.

BY SIMON ALLIN, LOCAL DEMOCRACY REPORTER

**B**arnet Council will more than double the size of a team set up to reduce reliance on care services and help people remain independent.

The number of roles in the town hall's in-house prevention and wellbeing team will be expanded from eight to 19 as part of an ongoing drive to cut costs and ensure people stay healthier for longer.

It comes as the adults and safeguarding committee looks to save £3.4million over the next three years, in a bid to reduce the council's total budget gap of £56.5m.

The prevention and wellbeing team works with people on the edge of the care system to improve their outcomes and prevent, reduce or delay their need for services.

According to a report presented to the committee in January, funding has been secured to enable a “significant expansion” of the team's work, allowing it to manage around 450 referrals per year from 2022/23, up from 200 at present.

The team provides personalised

## Expansion of council's wellbeing team agreed

### Move made in attempt to reduce dependency on care services



Credit Jack Finnigan / Unsplash

support for people known to adult social care and their informal carers, helping them to set short-term, achievable wellbeing goals. It also works to ensure people with dementia are able to remain living in the community for as long as possible.

In addition, it helps to create new support initiatives and carries out community engagement and development work with local organisations.

During the committee meeting, councillors welcomed the expansion of the team but raised concerns that some people were waiting too long for care after struggling to access services.

Dawn Wakeling, executive director of adults and health, said the council had an urgent response team that can respond “extremely quickly” in crisis situations.

She added: “We do have a very robust screening process, so we can respond to those requests in a timely manner.”

Committee members unanimously agreed the proposed priorities and approach for the expanded prevention and wellbeing service.



# NEWS | 7

Photo courtesy of Dr Richard Evans



BY ELIZABETH ATKIN

## Barnet community recognised in 2022 New Year Honours list

A local teacher, charity co-founder and a community champion have all received honours from the Queen

Several Barnet residents and community champions have been included on 2022's New Year Honours list.

Local teacher Dr Richard Evans, who was already a Member of the British Empire (MBE), has been made an Officer of the British Empire (OBE) – with further honours awarded to community workers Joseph Lettieri and Elizabeth Jane Stoll.

Barnet resident Richard currently teaches maths at Mill Hill County High School – and was awarded an MBE for services to education back in 2003. But it was his fundraising work during the Covid-19 pandemic that won him a second honour from the Queen.

One such activity was arranging and delivering food parcels for NHS staff at the height of the pandemic. The importance of the health service became ever more apparent, when just a day after dropping off parcels at the Royal Free Hospital in Hampstead, Richard was rushed back there as a patient after suffering a heart attack.

He has also raised funds for the Mayor of Barnet's Charity, Livability and several others.

Of the honour, Richard said: "I was very proud to receive a letter from the Cabinet Office informing me that following the advice from the Main Honours Committee, the Prime Minister would like to put my name forward to the Queen recommending that I receive an OBE.

*"Like many small charities we are struggling to keep going and we have had to adapt the way we work"*

"I know that there are millions of us who have contributed to support the NHS and have done their best to help everybody, and I feel humble to learn that what I did has been recognised."

Meanwhile, not one but two community workers connected to Barnet will receive a British Empire Medal (BEM) for their service.

Joseph Lettieri is the co-founder of Enfield-based charity Family Based Solutions, a service which supports vulnerable families and children to end the cycle of abuse. It operates in Enfield, Barnet and Haringey.

Speaking about the medal, Joseph told the *Post's* sister paper *Enfield Dispatch*: "I was very surprised [about the award]. I am pleased because it highlights the work we do as a charity. Like many small charities we are struggling to keep going and we have had to adapt the way we work.

"When we started we were three people with full-time jobs, working in schools, but now we have got six members of staff. We want to continue expanding the services we provide."

Elizabeth Jane Stoll was also awarded a BEM, 'for services to the community in the London Borough of Barnet during Covid-19.'

BY SIMON ALLIN, LOCAL DEMOCRACY REPORTER

## Ward patrols promised to reduce crime across Barnet

Council's community safety team will more than treble number of street-based officers

Council officers will patrol the streets of every ward in Barnet in an attempt to tackle crime and anti-social behaviour.

A shake-up of Barnet Council's community safety team will see the number of street-based officers rise from six to 21 and their shift patterns move from five to seven days per week.

It means uniformed officers will be able to patrol each of the borough's wards on the look-out for offenders, as well as making it easier for residents to report incidents.

The community safety team's objective is to tackle all forms of anti-social behaviour, burglaries, hate crimes and other criminal activity, including various types of fraud and environmental crime.

According to a council report, the shake-up of the team comes in response to a "general increase in crimes such as fly-tipping, anti-social behaviour, burglary and acts of violence, as well as hate crimes".

But although these incidents have been investigated, the report adds that "there has not been any noticeable increase in the identification and capture of perpetrators leading to prosecutions or any other sanctions by council officers".

In addition, residents have warned that they do not know who to contact to report incidents and complained of having waited long periods "for any meaningful council action to take place".

Under the changes, the number of posts in the team will be increased from 28 to 30, and a head of service for community safety will be created.

The 21 street-based officers will attend and investigate all reported incidents of fly-tipping and anti-social behaviour. They will work alongside residents, businesses and partners, including the Metropolitan Police and law enforcement agencies, to carry out investigations and help with intelligence gathering.

Declan Khan, the council's assistant director of counter fraud, community safety and protection, set out the changes in the report to the council's constitution and general purposes committee on Thursday.

He told councillors that to tackle increases in crime "we believe we need more people out on the street", admitting that the time taken to deal with offences had been "longer than we would like".

The changes to the community safety team were unanimously agreed by the committee and will take effect this month.



Credit Met Police



## FEATURE | 8

BY ELIZABETH ATKIN

## Pop to the top

Local entrepreneur Sashe Christopher honoured in list of inspirational female founders – for her sustainable baby clothes brand Pop My Way



It's a happy start to 2022 for Barnet-based business owner Sashe Christopher, who has been named as one of 100 inspirational women founders by campaign f:Entrepreneur.

Sashe, who runs an eco-conscious online baby clothing brand, Pop My Way, from her Barnet home, was added to the title's #also100 list, which is delivered by Small Business Britain – and champions trailblazing women running small businesses across the country.

Of the recognition, Sashe told *Barnet Post*: "I am so honoured and proud to be included on this year's list and am grateful for the acknowledgement to allow me to help other businesses and consumers on their sustainability journeys. I really want to make a difference through Pop My Way."

Pop My Way is all about its handy popper function – which allows new parents to keep track of essential accessories (such as bibs, dummy straps and socks), which attach straight onto their clothes – either a cotton, zip-up sleepsuit, cardigan or bodysuit.

Sashe started the business in November 2019, just a few months before the Covid-19 pandemic took hold.

"It was really challenging getting things off the ground once the pandemic hit as I was unable to meet with potential stockists in person," Sashe tells the *Post*.

"Thankfully, lots of celebrities and influencers were having babies and I was able to send them some Pop My Way clothing and accessories. They loved the brand enough to talk about

it on social media, so that was great for building trust and a brand identity with my customers and getting online sales."

The brand was also briefly on sale at Harvey Nichols in Knightsbridge – until their childrenswear department was suddenly closed.

Sashe was inspired to start Pop My Way in part due to her passion for sustainability – which she says is a way of life in her country of birth, South Africa.

"As a child of colour, I heard stories about what my

parents, grandparents and others endured," she shares.

"I noticed what everyday people did with the little that they had. I saw the informal housing settlements that people built from scraps of metal, plastic bags or other items they found.

"Sustainability is a way of life in South Africa – people are forced to reuse and recycle as much as possible. I started Pop My Way with these ideas of sustainability and innovation in mind.

"Unlike other brands who

claim to be 'sustainable' just by using organic fabrics, our entire supply chain is fully certified by The Global Organic Textile Standard (GOTS)."

There's also, of course, her personal experience of being a mum – and the mountain of quickly-worn baby clothes new parents often find themselves working through, as well as all those missing socks.

Sashe explains: "After 20 years in fashion, a tricky pregnancy and the birth of my daughter – [it] prompted me to think about ways to make early days with new babies easier.

"Nappy changes and feeds are complicated by impracticality, but by reducing the number of items in a baby's wardrobe and focusing on a few comfortable, practical and quality items, parents can rotate clothing.

"Our interchangeable mix and match outfits are in pastel colours, and the organic pima cotton we use is luxurious and durable enough to be passed down."

So, what's next for Pop My Way, beyond the #also100 nod – looking to the next few years?

"The fashion industry is one of the biggest polluters, so through Pop My Way I would like to make some changes and highlight these issues," Sashe concludes.

"I want to grow our UK business, expand internationally and encourage people to keep their used Pop My Way clothing items in circulation through our 'preloved' scheme. I believe we can be the game changer that the industry so desperately needs."

To see more of Pop My Way, visit: [popmyway.co.uk](http://popmyway.co.uk)



“  
The fashion industry is one of the biggest polluters  
”

## Mum's campaign to reduce pollution in Barnet

BY RUTH RAMAN

My four-year-old often complains about the stink on the North End Road on the way to school. She and her siblings are faced with exhaust fumes from cars, buses and large vehicles on a daily basis.

I'm a mum of three young children and a member of Barnet volunteer groups (Mothers' CAN, which stands for Climate Action Network, as well as Friends of the Earth) and with the question of air pollution and its impact weighing on my mind, I quickly found other

“  
We can make a difference in our everyday actions  
”

## Clean our air

members were wondering the same thing. Upon further digging, I found that the Trust for London was funding testing through Barnet and we applied to receive 10 diffusion tubes. These would test the amount of Nitrogen Dioxide (often referred to as NO<sub>2</sub>, this is a gas produced as a result of road traffic and other fossil fuel combustion processes) in a given space over a two-week period. We placed them on lampposts across Barnet, at sites we knew were well-trodden by all members of society.

The results of two sites, one outside the Hippodrome

and one outside St Anthony's School and Nursery (also opposite King Alfred School and Clowns Nursery) were above what the World Health Organization says is a safe level of NO<sub>2</sub>, with the former coming in with a reading of 56.79 micrograms in each cubic metre of air (µg m<sup>-3</sup>) and the latter at 44.42. Recently, the WHO limit of 40 µg m<sup>-3</sup> has been revised down to just 10µg m<sup>-3</sup>.

The British Medical Journal stated in September of this year: "During the covid pandemic, poor air quality increased the likelihood of infection from the corona-

virus and of deaths."

Why then, I wonder, did the council vote against Barnet joining the Mayor of London's anti-engine-idling action project? Engine idling creates unnecessary fumes and is a good way to prevent pollution.

Still, we can make a difference in our everyday actions. Not everyone can avoid travelling by car, and some jobs require the use of a vehicle. But we can choose to walk or cycle short journeys instead of taking the car. We can also use public transport for longer journeys and use electric vehicles rather than diesel and petrol vehicles where this is a viable choice.

Until they're a bit older, I know my kids will continue to ask me some big questions on the walk to school, and I will always do my best to answer them. I just hope, with action from all of us, their questions won't be prompted by air pollution.





## NEWS | 9

Credit Daiga Ellaby/Unsplash



BY SIMON ALLIN, LOCAL DEMOCRACY REPORTER

## ‘Tiny Forest’ planned next to North Circular

### Barnet Council teams up with environmental charity to plant trees

A small woodland the size of a tennis court will be planted next to the North Circular to protect the environment and provide a habitat for wildlife.

Barnet Council has teamed up with environmental charity Earthwatch to create an area of dense, fast-growing native woodland – part of its ‘Tiny Forest’ project – in an area of green space at Henlys Corner, near Mutton Brook.

Tiny Forests are designed to connect people with nature and combat the effects of climate change such as flooding and biodiversity loss. Made up of 600 trees, they are capable of attracting more than 500 animal and plant species during the first three years.

Paul Salman, Barnet organiser for volunteer group Goodgym, said he hoped the scheme would be the first of many in the borough.

He said: “A Tiny Forest is something that people get very excited about. They quickly understand all the benefits it will bring and see it as a really positive community-

building activity, so they just want to get involved

“It is representative of what trees do, and more importantly bigger forests do all over the world, to clean the air, slow down water runoff and provide a habitat.”

“  
*A Tiny Forest is something that people get very excited about. They quickly understand all the benefits it will bring*  
”



The site of the new woodland next to the North Circular, near Henlys Corner  
Credit Google Maps

Organisers are now looking for volunteers to help with the tree planting, which is set to take place on 24th February. Paul said churches and synagogues were already on board with the scheme, and children had been asking about the project.

After the trees have been planted, people can help to look after the site through weeding, litter-picking and other activities.

Paul added: “It is not just about the planting – it is about the whole process, the interactional element of it. The whole community should be engaged.”

The council’s environment committee unanimously agreed to the woodland project after it was proposed by Labour environment spokesperson Alan Schneiderman in November 2020. Alan said it was “really exciting” to see it going ahead, adding that Tiny Forest was a “great community initiative”.

People who are interested in getting involved can email the volunteer coordinators at [tinyforestbarnet@gmail.com](mailto:tinyforestbarnet@gmail.com)

## Charity shop shuts

The Children’s Air Ambulance (TCAA) charity has closed its Chipping Barnet shop for good.

Its closure was announced on 17th January, with a statement saying the property it leased at 91 High Street had been sold.

TCAA said that the Barnet boutique had provided “vital funds” for the charity.

It costs £3,500 for each potentially life-saving air ambulance call-out. And though TCAA is a national charity – it says on its website that it receives no government or National Lottery funding.

TCAA retail area manager, Jayne Botfield, added: “We’d like to thank our loyal customers for their support at our Barnet store.



Credit Google Street View

“It’s not the end for the charity and we welcome all our shoppers to visit our other London stores in Archway, Crouch End, Muswell Hill, and Stoke Newington.”

## Cool Oak group launches to protect Brent Reservoir

Local musician Ben Watt has announced the launch of Cool Oak, a new environmental pressure group.

The singer, who is one half of Everything But The Girl, founded the group after spending much of 2021 campaigning to clean up Brent Reservoir, more commonly known as the Welsh Harp – following ‘decades of neglect’.

Of last year’s success, Cool Oak said in their inaugural newsletter: “A year ago, owners seemed asleep at the wheel, and plastic pollution disfigured the

protected marshes.

“Today, the wheelie bins and trollies are gone, and this year £85,000 will be spent on tree thinning, marshland debris clearance and a river inlet clean-up with a further £75,000 earmarked for breeding rafts and floating reed beds...”

“We thank the owners – in particular Canal and River Trust – for stepping up and responding so positively to our campaign in the past year. There is plenty more to do.”

To learn more, visit [www.cooloakgroup.com](http://www.cooloakgroup.com)



Cool Oak Bridge Credit Wikicommons/David Howard



# The spy next door

One of Barnet's most fascinating blue plaques belongs to Garbo, the most famous double agent of the Second World War

BY ELIZABETH ATKIN

I

magine this. It's 1942. Halfway through the Second World War. You're a double agent working for MI5, feeding a steady stream of lies and deceptions to the Nazis – concocting an elaborate network of as many as 27 fictional German 'spies', and communicating as each of them by letter and radio. You're such a convincing actor that you're given the codename Garbo, after the Oscar-nominated Swedish movie star Greta. And all of this is happening from a normal-looking, 1920s house in Greater London: 35 Crespigny Road in Hendon.

Sound like the start of a spy novel? This is one retelling of the very true tale of Juan Pujol Garcia, aka Garbo, the Second World War's most famous (and successful) spy.

He was so successful, in fact, that he's often credited with playing a crucial role in helping the Allies – Britain, France and United States – win the war, as a key player in Operation Fortitude South. In June 1944, Garcia and his handler, Tomás Harris, were able to convince the Germans that the D-Day attack on Normandy to free a Nazi-controlled France was actually a diversionary tactic. The real attack, they said, was coming to



Credit Wikicommons/Spudgun87



“

*His deep hatred of fascism, well-reported, was borne of his time fighting in the Spanish Civil War*

”

the shores of Pas-de-Calais. Even after this information was proven to be false, neither Garcia nor Harris were rumbled. Just weeks after his biggest deception of all, Adolf Hitler awarded Garcia an Iron Cross in July 1944 – for his ‘extraordinary’ services to Germany. He was also awarded an MBE, though secretly, at first. Can't blow your cover.

Juan Pujol Garcia was born in 1912, in Barcelona, Spain. He first worked as the manager of a chicken farm, later becoming a hotel manager in Madrid.

His deep hatred of fascism, well-reported, was borne of his time fighting in the Spanish Civil War (1936-39), in which he fought on, and came to hate, both sides. Moving across Europe to the UK, he first contacted Germany offering to work as a spy. And after several attempts at offering his services, he finally convinced MI5 to let him work as a double agent in favour of the Allies.

After the Second World War, Garcia didn't return to his former life in Spain. He stayed with MI5 for a while, keeping

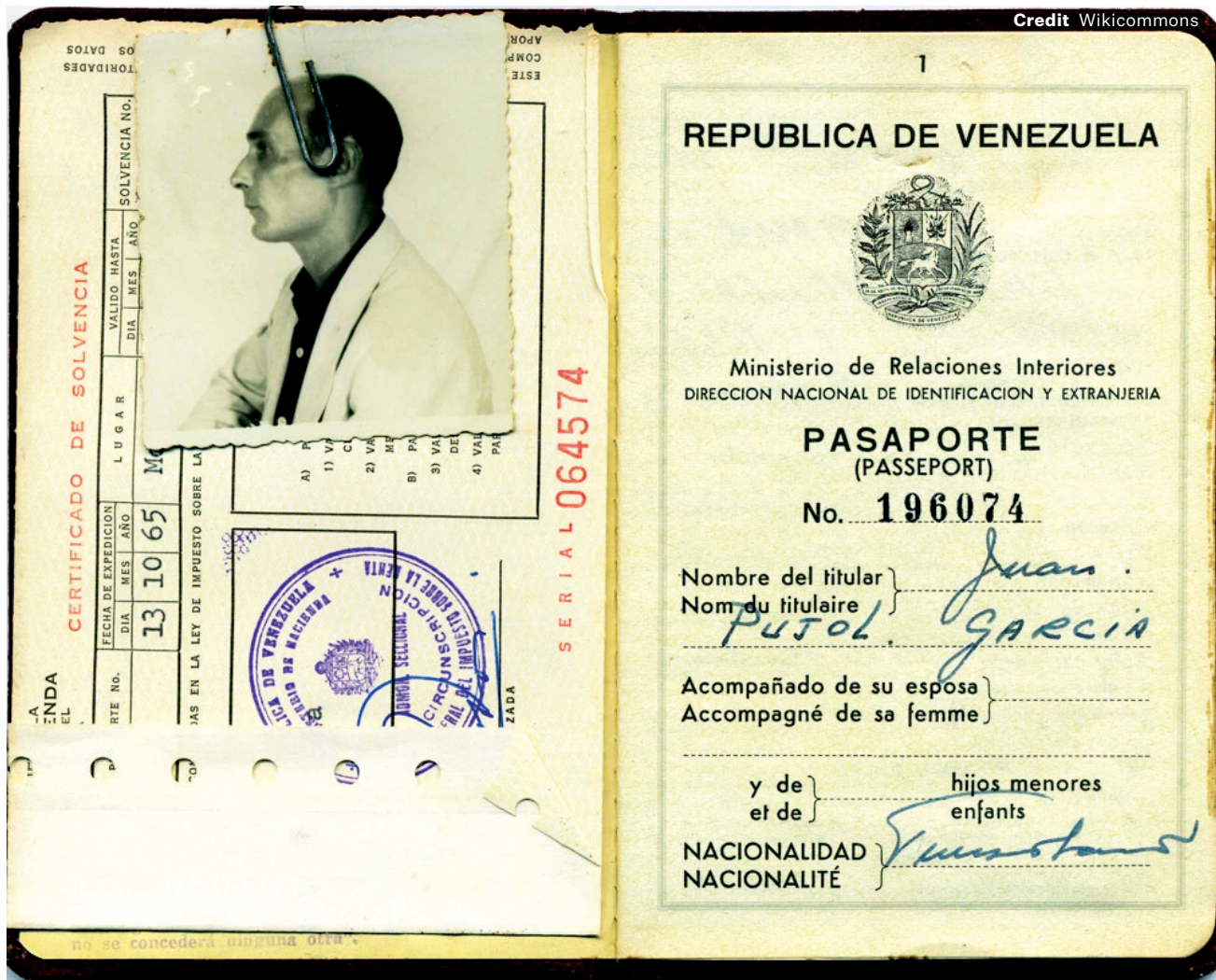
The unassuming view of Crespigny Road in Hendon, where Garbo pulled off his deception







Road in  
deceptions



Joan Pujol Garcia in disguise  
Credit Wikicommons



Joan Pujol Garcia  
Credit Wikicommons



Pujol as a conscript, 1931  
Credit Wikicommons

“  
*After several attempts at offering his services,  
he finally convinced MI5 to let him work as a  
double agent*  
”

tabs on former Nazis, before faking his death and escaping it all. The story was that he'd died of malaria in Angola, but in reality, he was keeping a low profile in Venezuela. Until 1985, his identity was a secret, but he revealed it with an autobiography entitled *Operation Garbo*. He died a few years after its release, in 1988, in the Venezuelan capital, Caracas. Since his death, Garbo has been the subject of articles, books, and even a 2009 feature film. His old home on Crespigny Road now bears an

English Heritage blue plaque with his name, which was placed in 2020. Garcia, however, didn't live alone at this Hendon house, nor exclusively with his handler – his wife, Araceli Gonzalez de Pujol, and their son, lived with him. According to History.com, Araceli was also subject to a number of her husband's deceptions, including one occasion in 1943. She was apparently so isolated and homesick for her native Spain that she threatened to blow his cover (and MI5's double agent operation) to the Spanish

Embassy. Garbo pretended he had been arrested and detained by MI5 as a result of the security risk, prompting Araceli to sign an apology swearing she'd never threaten to reveal his secret again. After the war, Araceli joined him in Venezuela, but eventually returned to Spain. She was also told he'd died of malaria, and Garcia later remarried. Beyond the Crespigny Road address, the couple also lived at 55 Elliot Road for a period of time, which is just a few streets away. But number 35 remained Garbo's inconspicuous workplace.



# 12 ARTS & CULTURE

## A year of photography

A photographer from North Finchley has exhibited his work in Italy and on the Isle of Wight

BY MICHAEL J DUKE

**I**t's been a busy year for me, especially since October 2021 when I was in Italy exhibiting my post-production photography at the Florence Biennial of Contemporary Art and Design.

This was the second time of showing there – the previous time was October 2019. The 2021 theme was eternal feminine which, at first, I thought meant that the show was for women only.

I'm glad to say that a guy's perspective was just as important, so I chose some from my series of dance photography which I subsequently gave creative treatments.

This was followed by one of my trips to see friends in the Isle of Wight who are fellow members of the Isle of Wight Photographic Society. The club was planning the annual exhibition in Ryde and I was asked to take two of my images, so I took with me two from my 'Birds On The Move' series to which I had also given the creative treatment. The exhibition was up for a month and will have a second showing in Brading at the Roman Villa in March 2022.

But, I'm now taking a break from work to focus on my health. A few months back, I realised that I had put on quite a fair bit of weight. I've managed to lose some weight but I still have more to take off in order to keep healthy. So, I've decided to upgrade my exercise and 'Run A Marathon' raising money for prostate cancer research.

Luckily that is not 26.2 miles all in one go, but over the course of the month. By running for a good cause, I've committed myself to seeing it through, and I chose to support prostate cancer research because it has affected my family directly. You can find out more about my photography, or the marathon, by getting in touch through Facebook or my website.

Visit [mjduke.co.uk](http://mjduke.co.uk) | Facebook [/michaelj.duke.9](https://www.facebook.com/michaelj.duke.9)



## Arts against hunger

How a new community theatre aims to help feed local families

BY ELIZABETH ATKIN

**M**ill Hill charity NW7 Hub is set to launch a new creative venture – which it hopes will eventually entirely fund its local food bank.

The charity, which launched in 2016 and has managed the Mill Hill Partnership Library with Barnet Council since 2017, will open the doors of a new, 80-seat community theatre in April 2022.

It will be free for performers to book the space in order to put on their own shows, with a small portion of ticket sales being directed to the food bank as a donation.

NW7 Hub volunteer, trustee and arts director Adam Morley says he hopes the theatre will

allow actors, singers, dancers and artists who've struggled to keep afloat during the pandemic to thrive with a no-cost venue option.

Adam tells *Barnet Post*: "There's [been] very little work, there's very little income and people have had to do what they've had to do to survive and support their families.

"And what we would like to do is offer a platform for performers to be able to take risks without consequences in terms of finances and having to pay for the space. We're keen on just getting people into the building."

NW7 Hub's food bank currently supports 150 families (and counting) – around 500 people – and the portion of ticket sales earmarked as donations is set to make a huge difference.

"We'd probably add a pound to each ticket," Adam suggests, adding: "But the real income is made from the bar, so we'd open up a bar, and take that proportion.

"If we hit 50% of our target, we'll fund the food bank – which costs £15,000 a year to run."

He adds: "Lots of people have a misconception about Mill Hill, that it is affluent and a leafy suburb. Some of that is true, but within that there's great poverty.

"Covid has had a huge impact, and with the rising cost of living, and inflation, [we're starting to see] people's neighbours, friends, family. We need help.

"The council have been very, very good with the food bank, and we're fortunate that we've got some very good suppliers... but it's unfortunately growing all the time. It's not receding."

One of the key challenges for the food bank, Adam says, is that it is also a goods bank – meaning it aims to provide personal hygiene products and other essentials, which can often be extremely costly to purchase.

He tells *Barnet Post*: "Hygiene products, feminine hygiene products, children's products – we can't get enough of that. They disappear instantly."

The new Mill Hill theatre will also become home to a twice-weekly drama society, which

Adam says doesn't require you to be an actor, writer or budding director – just keen to get involved in a new project.

"We're pushing to support to communities – but people also need quality of life," Adam notes. "They don't need to 'just survive'. There's got to be more.

"If we can offer a high class arts and cultural programme locally, as well as benefiting those most in need, we're serving our purpose and supporting the wellbeing – both physical and mental – of our constituent community. And also taking pressure off frontline services."

Residents across the borough (and wider London) are invited to get involved – and bookings are already trickling in, though you'll need to think creatively to make the most of the space.

Adam shares: "It's a black box space, because during the day it's a dance school and is used for other activities.

"Anyone who wants to express themselves can come along and pitch to us and we'll have a look at the date, and see what we can do."

**Want to book the theatre space, or enquire about Mill Hill's new drama society? Contact [adam@nw7hub.org.uk](mailto:adam@nw7hub.org.uk) to find out more.**

**Learn more about NW7 Hub's work in the community at [www.nw7hub.org.uk](http://www.nw7hub.org.uk)**



# Lockdown inspired me to turn my passion into a business

How one woman ditched the office to follow her dream as an artist



**M**y name's Judy and I'm an artist based in Mill Hill, who used my time on furlough from my corporate job during lockdown to reignite my passion for art and turn it into a business idea. I've always crafted and painted in my spare time, but until lockdown, I didn't have the headspace or opportunity to pursue it more seriously and to do what I love every day.

I now paint and draw from my studio at home, and sell my work online, at exhibitions and in galleries. My focus is on creating bold, abstract, floral-inspired paintings which are vibrant and fun. I also enjoy doing commissions to create bespoke artwork to match clients' styles and décor.

I'm currently exhibiting as part of the Finchley Arts Depot Winter Showcase alongside other artists and crafters from the local community. I have a range of colourful artworks at [www.judycenturyart.com](http://www.judycenturyart.com) or you can follow me on Instagram (@judycenturyart) for more behind the scenes action!



## • Continued from Page-1

and parking issues, and the threatened compulsory purchase of homes to make way for the scheme.

Nizza Fluss, a Conservative councillor for Hendon, told the committee that the use of compulsory purchase orders to buy up residents' homes did not meet the public interest test set out in the council's Local Plan.

A further scheme approved by the committee involves demolishing the Meritage Centre – a community meeting centre in Church End and Church Terrace – and building 181 student flats, 33 shared-living units, and a health and wellbeing centre on the site.

Describing the proposed new buildings as a "monstrosity", Hendon resident Alexander Fischbaum, a chartered surveyor and accountant, said: "You are destroying the neighbourhood, you are ripping out community assets, and you

are supporting a transient student population with all of the problems that brings."

Later on in the meeting, residents and councillors slammed the plan to turn the existing Hendon Public Library building into a business school. An online petition to save the library has so far gained more than 2,000 signatures.

Gabbie Asher, another local resident, said the plan would cause "irrevocable harm to the building, the locale, the environment and the community". She claimed the views of the community had not been considered, and the building should remain as a "people's public library".

Labour councillors Anne Clarke and Sara Conway, along with Cllr Fluss, also spoke against the plans and urged the council to reconsider.

Throughout the meeting, a representative of Middlesex University, along with the council's planning agent, defended the schemes. James

Kennedy, deputy chief executive of the university, said the new student accommodation would provide "significant benefits" and "add character to the local area" while cutting students' commuting time. Christopher Tennant, planning director at GL Hearn, said it would bring economic and social benefits, including employment opportunities.

Responding to concerns over the library building, Christopher said it would be "sensitively renovated to enhance the heritage value of the building". He added that public access would be maintained following its conversion to a business school, with rooms available for residents and community groups, along with a "new community cafe".

Planning officers told the committee the schemes were in line with local and national policies. Acknowledging the legal challenge to the supplementary planning document,

officers wrote in their reports that it had not been given any weight in the determination of the applications.

The committee also approved plans to build a two-storey building at a car park in Fuller Street to house the veterinary charity People's Dispensary for Sick Animals (PDSA), which will be moved from the Meritage Centre. Partly to compensate for the loss of parking space, a proposal to create 76 new spaces at Prince Of Wales Estate was also given the green light.

A plan to renovate the former Quinta Club in Mays Lane so it can house the Schools Libraries Resource Service was unanimously approved.

Labour and Liberal Democrat committee members voted against the plans for the student accommodation and changes to the library. They abstained on the plans for the Fuller Street car park and the Prince of Wales Estate.



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## HISTORY

## Our industrious past

BY MARK AMIES

**W**hen you think of London do you think of it as a place of manufacturing? The chances are that if you are under the age of 40 then the answer is likely to be no. However, you would only need to go back a few decades to see the last vestiges of industries that once dominated the metropolis, and in Barnet there were a considerable number of factories.

I have been interested in London's industrial history for many years and growing up in the 1970s and 80s I was aware of the factories that were gradually beginning to close. I found it sad that these once important places were fast disappearing, never to return. It seemed tragic that the buildings were then demolished, often to make way for anonymous retail or warehousing sheds. A few years ago, I wrote a couple of short articles about these lost industries, and this eventually led to me doing a series of regular slots on the BBC Radio London's *Robert Elms Show*. As many of you will know Mr Elms is familiar with our part of London, having spent his formative years growing up on the Watling Estate in Burnt Oak. Whilst doing these appearances I produced a book, called *London's Industrial Past* which was published by Amberley in the summer of 2020.

The book is not a complete account of every industry in London, as this would require a huge tome, instead, I chose specific types of manufacture. In addition, I decided to concentrate on the 20th century, as I thought it would be more relatable to the reader. I featured several companies who were based in the areas that now make up Barnet borough, and chiefly they were aircraft makers, but I have also included Schweppes in West Hendon and Dubreq, makers of the stylophone, who had several sites in Cricklewood.

There were many aeroplane manufacturers due, in part, to the existence of Hendon Aerodrome, which had been established in 1910. Colindale boasted two major manufacturers during World War One, Grahame-White Aviation, who were on either side of Aerodrome Road, and the Aircraft Manufacturing Company, who were up on the Hyde. The latter company, (who were more commonly known as Airco), boasted having the World's largest aircraft factory in World War One, covering both sides of the Edgware Road. The only surviving buildings from this enterprise are the former office block, now used by the Beis Yaakov School, and one of the many factory blocks, which has been a KwikFit since the 1970s, (this building features on

the cover of my book, photographed in 1917). Without a doubt, the longest-lasting and most productive aircraft company were Handley Page, in Cricklewood, based in the area from 1912 to 1965. The factory turned out large bombers and civil airliners that were known across the world, giving large numbers of people jobs and skills, and contributed valuable money to the local and national economies.

Other notable Barnet concerns included Johnson's of Hendon, who made photographic supplies and equipment, and they had a factory, the site of which is now covered by part of the Brent Cross shopping mall. That most humble of products rawlplugs were made at in a factory of Hale Lane, Mill Hill, and that is now a trendy loft apartment block. Just next to Schweppes on The Hyde was the firm of Duple who made

bodies for coaches and commercial vehicles, as well as large parts of Handley Page Halifax bomber aircraft. The site was cleared after Duple left in 1970, and was taken over by Boosey & Hawkes, the manufacturer of musical instruments, who also had a more established site in Edgware. The Duple site is being redeveloped once again for a large residential complex, which the current occupier Sainsbury's will have a store within.

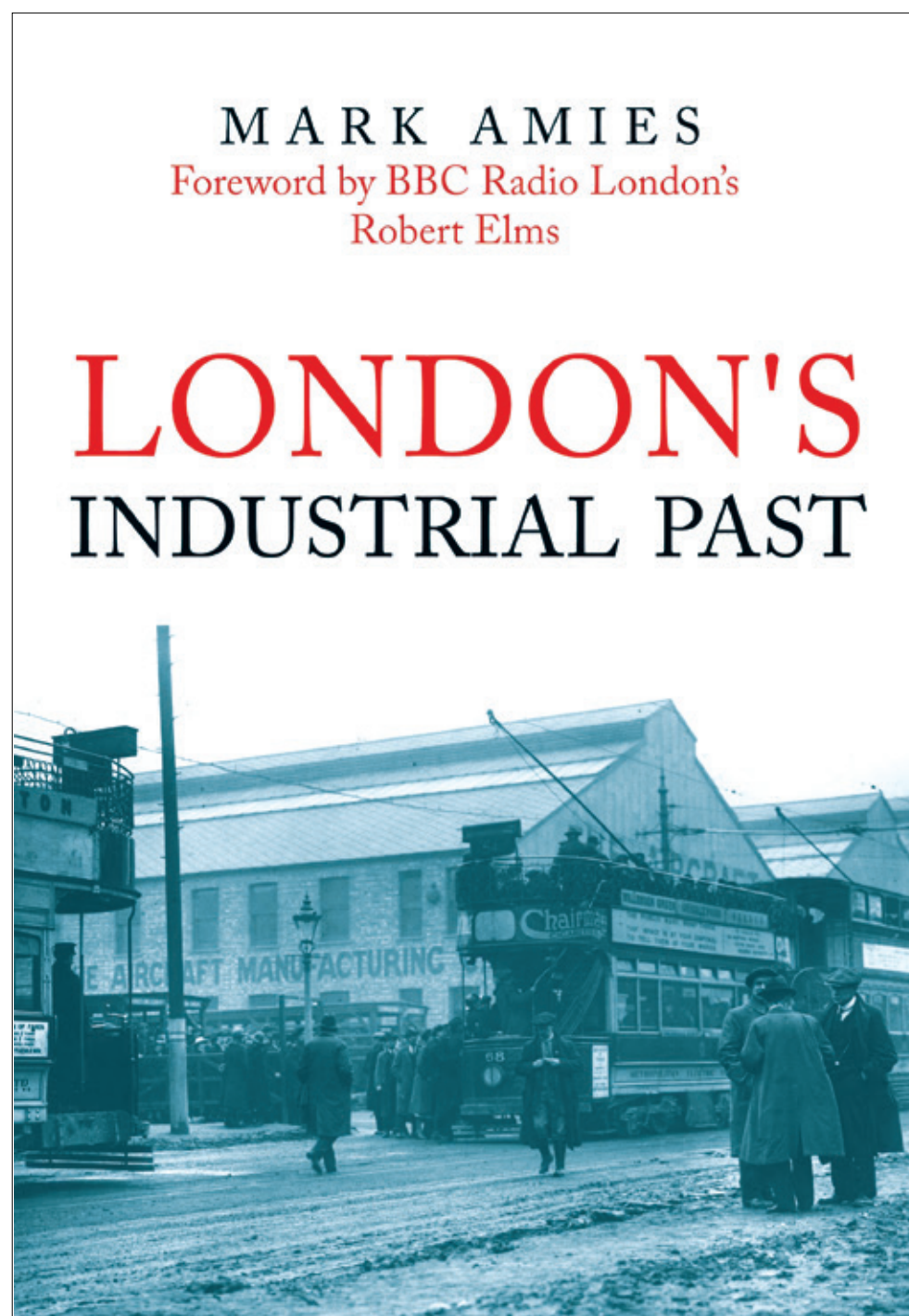
Many thousands of people who lived in the Barnet area worked in other factories across North-West London and the capital as a whole, and you will find these in my book, with big names like Hoover, Firestone, Smiths Crisps and Kodak, to name but a few. So many of the former factories have gone, wiped from the landscape, and in the process removing the ability to prompt historical enquiry.

One thing that can't easily be wiped away is the collective memory of so many people, and it is those memories and passed-on stories that keep the industrial past alive. Factories not only provided employment, but they also provided a valuable social function, and gave identity to areas, who were proud of the products were being made in their part of London. Many companies provided social and sports facilities and thousands of friendships and marriages were created in these environments.

To many people the factories that were scattered across London represented so much more than just a workplace, and there was a sense that they would always be there providing work and generating opportunities. Despite an apparent boom in the 1950s, a general decline set in during the 1960s and on into the 1980s. One by one the factories closed, unemployment rose, and local economies suffered. Some people moved out, looking for work in other areas where industry was still going, others found new jobs in different types of employment. Of course, London's industrial growth and decline is just another stage in its history, and it moves on, finding new areas of development.

In October my next book, *Flying up the Edgware Road* will be published, and it takes a more in-depth look at the early days of aviation at the Hendon Aerodrome, and how the growth of the aviation industry changed North West London, from Kilburn through to Edgware.

If you want to get a copy of my book, *London's Industrial Past*, you can take advantage of a lower price by ordering the book from [www.amberley-books.com](http://www.amberley-books.com), using the special code LonInd22 for 10% off the publisher's price.



“  
*I have been interested in London's industrial history for many years and growing up in the 1970's and 80's I was aware of the factories that were gradually beginning to close*  
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# NEWS

# 15

Cases of Covid-19 in Barnet among highest in London, but hospitalisations stable

BY SIMON ALLIN, LOCAL DEMOCRACY REPORTER

**B**arnet Council has launched a campaign to tackle the spread of Covid-19, after the local case rate rose to be among the highest in London.

The council launched the campaign urging residents to follow key safety advice, producing posters to put up in businesses and public spaces, alongside images to share on social media.

It comes after the borough recorded 1,101 new cases of Covid-19 per 100,000 people in the seven days to 12th January, according to data from Public Health England, making it the eighth-highest rate in the capital.

In mid-December, Barnet had one of the lowest rates in London despite recording more than 1,000 cases per 100,000 people.

The number of patients in hospital with Covid-19 at Royal Free London NHS Foundation Trust, which runs Barnet Hospital, has

## Covid-19 campaign launched amid continuing high case rate

more than tripled since mid-December, but continues to remain significantly below the peak recorded at this time last year.

On 8th January, the most recent date available at the time of writing for individual NHS trusts, the seven-day average of hospital patients with Covid-19 being treated by Royal

Free was 227.3. That compares to 70.6 on 11th December and 510.9 recorded on 16th January 2021.

With more than a quarter of residents yet to get their first vaccine, the town hall is working with local community groups and businesses to boost uptake. It is also urging



Credit Braño/Unsplash

people to wear a face covering in public places, let fresh air in, meet outdoors, take tests, and isolate if they are feeling unwell.

Dr Tamara Djuretic, director of public health at Barnet Council, warned the NHS and other essential services were under pressure because of “regular winter illnesses, Covid-19, and a high number of staff having to isolate after testing positive”.

Dr Djuretic said: “Sadly, the pandemic is not yet over, so it is vital that we do all that we can to keep the virus in the cold in the coming months.

“I urge everyone to get the vaccine – their first, second and booster jab. The vaccines significantly reduce the chances of getting seriously ill or dying from Covid-19.

“Please wear a face covering in public places and transport to help reduce transmission. Let fresh air in and wash your hands regularly to stop Covid-19 from hanging around.

“Rapid test before entering crowded or enclosed spaces and before meeting a vulnerable person to help reduce the spread of Covid-19.

“Self-isolate immediately if you are feeling unwell or experiencing symptoms of Covid-19. Book a PCR test and follow the latest self-isolation guidance.”

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NEWS | 16

# Low-traffic scheme proposed to stop rat-runners

## Traffic enforcement cameras to be used on roads between Colindale and Burnt Oak

BY SIMON ALLIN,  
LOCAL DEMOCRACY REPORTER

A plan to stop drivers taking shortcuts through residential roads in Burnt Oak and Colindale has been unveiled by Barnet Council. The town hall launched a January consultation on proposed traffic restrictions designed to reduce “rat-running”, congestion and vehicle noise while improving air quality and road safety. According to the council, the scheme – which is similar to low-traffic neighbourhoods (LTNs) introduced in other boroughs – comes in response to concerns raised by local residents. It aims to encourage traffic to stick to the main roads on the boundaries of the residential areas. The proposals involve closing sections of Booth Road and The Greenway to through motor traffic, using enforcement cameras. Two camera points would be

installed on each road, and drivers passing both cameras in quick succession would be deemed to be rat-running and issued with a penalty charge notice.

“  
*The scheme comes in response to concerns raised by local residents. It aims to encourage traffic to stick to the main roads*  
”

Although residents and businesses would be able to access their properties, some would need to change their routes in and out of their roads to avoid passing the cameras. Initially, the point closures would operate for up to 18 months using an experimental traffic order. A report evaluating

the scheme would then be released before the council decides whether to make the changes permanent. The town hall has won funding from the Department for Transport and Transport for London to implement the proposals. Some LTNs in other boroughs have proven unpopular, with residents complaining over increased traffic on boundary and surrounding roads, longer journey times and access problems for emergency services. The scheme proposed for Burnt Oak and Colindale would not use physical measures such as planters, so it would not affect access for the emergency services. Barnet Council will monitor the effect of the restrictions on main road traffic. The consultation ran until 31st January, and the findings will contribute to the final scheme design. The results will be published in March, along with the council’s response. For more details, visit [engage.barnet.gov.uk/burntoak-colindale-neighbourhood-measures](https://engage.barnet.gov.uk/burntoak-colindale-neighbourhood-measures)



# House price rise

BY KATIE WILLIAMS,  
DATA REPORTER

Barnet house prices have increased by 0.4% in just one month, figures reveal. The average Barnet property cost £561,441 in November, a 0.4% increase on October, according to the latest statistics from the Land Registry. In the same month, London’s overall average house price was £519,934 – and across the UK a much lower £270,708. Over the last year, the average sale price of property in Barnet rose by £35,000, a 6.6% uplift on the previous year. In comparison, London’s annual growth was 5.1%. The largest yearly increase was in Camden, by an average of 17.9% to £961,000. At the other end of the scale, properties in Hackney lost 8.5% of their value, giving an average price of £543,000.

# Sign up to the Barnet Post newsletter

We have recently launched a weekly newsletter to keep readers up-to-date with the latest news, features and comment from the Barnet Post website



Sign up:  
[eepurl.com/hrevTv](https://eepurl.com/hrevTv)



Advertisement

## Licensing Act 2003 Notice of Application for a Premises Licence

Notice is hereby given that **Pizza GoGo Mr Razaqat Ali** has applied to the Licensing Authority of London Borough of Barnet for a Premises Licence to permit:

- Late night refreshment from 11:00pm to 05:00am Monday to Sunday for the premises **Pizza GoGo** situated at 12 Halliwick Court Parade, Woodhouse Rd, London, N12 0NB

A register of licensing applications can be inspected at 8th Floor, 2 Bristol Avenue, Colindale, London, NW9 4EW. Appointments to inspect the register can be made by telephoning 02083597443 during office hours. Any person wishing to submit relevant representations concerning this application must give notice in writing to the London Borough of Barnet, Licensing Team at the address above, giving in detail the grounds of the representation no later than **23rd February 2022**.

The council will not entertain representations where the writer requests that his identity remains anonymous. Copies of all representations will be included in the papers presented to the Licensing Authorities Sub Committee and will therefore pass into the public domain.

Representations must relate to one or more of the four Licensing Objectives: the prevention of crime and disorder, public safety, the prevention of public nuisance and the protection of children from harm.

It is an offence liable on conviction to a fine up to £5000 under section 158 of the Licensing Act 2003 knowingly or recklessly to make a false statement in connection with an application dated this **26th day of January 2022**.







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## COLUMNS

Credit Brooke Cagle/Unsplash



# The power of small talk

BY RORY COOPER

**A**fter nearly two years of dealing with the Covid-19 pandemic in Barnet, I have been reflecting on what has been missing from my life over the last two years. People often raise their eyebrows when I tell them how much I miss my commute and can't wait to get back into the office. Don't get me wrong, I love my extra hour in bed and am very lucky that I am able to continue my job remotely when government guidelines insist upon it but I can't deny the benefits or my enjoyment of being out of the house and getting around the borough.

It wasn't just the fresh air and the exercise I got but getting to explore new places and being around people which did me the world of good. The small and supposedly insignificant interactions with fellow travellers, shopkeepers and colleagues that I didn't think much of at the time: people watching on the 263 and the 34 bus, small talk at community meetings; awkward chit chat in the lift or the shared kitchen in Barnet House. These sorts of connections and relationships may not feel much at the time and they might not even feel that joyful, but they are

part of the fabric of human connection and communication that humans, as social animals, thrive upon. We might not realise it but while we are talking about the weather in the corridor, our brains are lighting up in all the right places!

This year, we have all learnt very quickly how to make digital connections. It has been incredible to see how much we have been able to get done from laptops and phones (including *Barnet Post* springing into life; a great new source of connection!).

Having managed a Covid-19 response service during the first wave of the pandemic and now as manager of a befriending service for younger adults in the borough, the ability to support and connect with our neighbours digitally has been an incredible gift and allowed residents to create and maintain social connections safely. I still believe we need to be careful not to leave behind the important social and well-being benefits of being amongst other human beings.

We hear debates about the importance of going back to 'normal' and in-person working as standard in order to boost productivity and economic growth and I am sure the high streets and businesses around Barnet might agree with this sugges-

tion. I am much more concerned about the long-term effects on both our physical and mental health if we continue to keep away from each other for too long. While I think it is vital we follow the necessary guidelines to keep each other safe over the coming months and we can continue to enjoy the benefits of hybrid working. I hope we can return to enough genuine interaction and engagement as soon as possible.

Talking and engaging with people face to face has tremendous benefits on the quality of our communications. So much of our understanding with other people is non-verbal and we can more quickly identify issues and solutions in our lives and relationships when we are in the same room as each other.

The physical and mental benefits of socialising, conversation, eye contact and particularly a handshake or hug cannot be underestimated. I hope we all get to share a few more moments such as a joke from a stranger, a hug from a loved one or that life-changing conversation with a new friend in 2022.

**For more information about befriending services in Barnet and all the latest wellbeing news and services in the borough:**  
[barnetwellbeing.org.uk/befriending-in-barnet](https://barnetwellbeing.org.uk/befriending-in-barnet)

## Is journalism good for democracy?

**C**an you help us to find out if journalism is good for democracy?

*Barnet Post* received funding from the Public Interest News Foundation (PINF) to better understand the relationship between local democracy and local journalism. The fund aims to find out what is the true relationship between local journalism and democratic engagement? And how can we strengthen this relationship?

Other researchers have looked at the relationship between journalism and democracy at a general level. In 2020, DCMS published research by Plum Consulting showing that increased local newspaper circulation leads to increased voter turnout.

This research inspired PINF to ask several important questions:

*"We hope to see if engagement in local news impacts the numbers of people turning up to vote"*

If there's a correlation between local news and voter turnout, then what drives this correlation? Do some forms of local journalism

have a more democratic impact than others?

With funding from the Neal & Dominique Gandhi Foundation, PINF set up the PINF Impact Fund to measure the impacts of voter local news and democratic engagement in London and Birmingham at the ward level.

There are 8,694 electoral wards in the UK, with an average population size of 5,500. Wards elect councillors, most of whom are members of political parties (unlike parish and town councillors, who aren't usually party political). Ward elections can be the first rung on the ladder for the political leaders of the future, and local councillors are

responsible for huge amounts of public spending. The City of Birmingham's budget in 2021 was £3.2bn, for example.

Here in Barnet, Colindale had the lowest voter turnout (31.4%) in the London Borough of Barnet's most recent local elections. As part of the research with PINF, we are hoping to engage residents in Colindale – now split into two new wards – in local journalism about the upcoming 2022 local elections.

In the lead up to the May local elections, we will be conducting focus groups with local people to better understand what you believe needs to be changed in Colindale. We want to know if you engage with your local councillor and, if not, why not? What issues are impacting you and your community? And how councillors can better support you?

We will be writing up your views into an article to be featured in *Barnet Post* which we will show to councillors who are up for election in the spring.

Like this, we're asking local people to really drive the news agenda and participate in local democracy.

After our engagement with people in Colindale, we'll be making comparisons with neighbouring ward Burnt Oak which had a similarly low turnout in the last elections. By making the comparison we hope to see if engagement in local news impacts the numbers of people turning up to vote.

**If you want to attend our focus groups get in touch with [barnetpost@socialspider.com](mailto:barnetpost@socialspider.com)**

**You can also help the Public Interest News Foundation by filling in the following questionnaires.**

**Do you live in Colindale? Fill in this survey on local news and local democracy: <https://forms.office.com/r/4UZW9fw0mf> and you could win £250 to donate to a charity of your choice.**

**Do you live in Burnt Oak? Fill in this survey on local news and local democracy: <https://forms.office.com/r/Fv6yMVOXsa> and you could win £250 to donate to a charity of your choice.**



## FEATURE

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BY SIMON ELLINAS

# Are you going to celebrate Lupercalia this February?

## The surprising pagan origins of Valentine's Day

Every year, 14th February comes around to remind everyone of how much High Street greetings cards shops love them. Although thousands of people across the globe indulge in sending messages to their “Bunnykins” or their “SmudgeBall”, very few are aware of the origins of the day itself.

It is said that there were three St. Valen-

tines, all of whom were martyred although it is not known if this was because they got caught by their wives sending cards to other women. Still, it wasn't a good start for a supposedly joyous festival.

One legend has it that an imprisoned Valentine fell in love with his jailer's daughter and sent her a letter containing the words, “I weally wuv my liddle Squidgy-Bunny-

Poos, from your Hunky Spunky Valentine.” Of course, he was executed very soon after the jailer saw this message.

But some historians argue the celebration of St Valentine's was a Christianisation of the pagan celebration of Lupercalia. This Roman festival celebrated fertility and involved the sacrifice of goats and dogs followed by slapping women and crop fields with the

bloody dripping hides stripped from the goats. Makes a trip to Clinton's seem like a piece of cake. No wonder the Christian church established a St Valentine's Day and encouraged people to place soppy personal ads and send heart-encrusted cards instead.

Simon Ellinas is a cartoonist and writer living in Barnet. Visit: [www.simonillustrations.com](http://www.simonillustrations.com)



# Support independent local journalism

## What we do

Here at *Barnet Post* we do things differently. We combine professional journalism with voluntary contributions from people who live and work in the borough and create content which is responsive to and reflective of the community.

These are challenging times for print media with many newspapers closing and advertising revenue in decline, but our not-for-profit model offers a new approach to creating local journalism which is inclusive and accountable.

## How you can help

As a not-for-profit publication we rely on the generous support of our community. We look to our readers, who recognise the value of independent journalism, to help support us.

You can do this by becoming a member either as an individual or as an organisation. See the rewards opposite and once you've decided what package you would like, visit our website: [barnetpost.co.uk/membership](http://barnetpost.co.uk/membership)

## Individual rewards

### £3 per month upwards:

Name in print and online, pin badge

### £5 per month upwards:

Name in print and online, pin badge, tote bag, paper posted to you every month

## Organisational rewards

### £10 per month:

Name in print and online, 10% discount on advertising

### £20 per month:

Name and logo in print and online, 20% discount on advertising

### £50 per month:

Name and logo in print and online, 40% discount, six free small adverts per year

## Members

Binita Shah, Simon Watson, Ray Floyd, Fatema Ahmed, Catherine Loveday, Andrea Poser, Katharine Sathe, Parmodh Sharma, Charlotte Thompson, John Thompson, David Brindle, Michael Gilbey, Richard Fawcett, Yue Yin, Paul Salman, Chris Smith, Lisa Bard