



# The Woodsider

DECEMBER 2018  
[www.woodside-park.com](http://www.woodside-park.com)

## Letter from the Chairman – a personal view

We've had a sizzling hot summer and a lovely warm autumn when all the trees in Woodside Park turned delicate shades of amber, sepia and rust. So I suppose we shouldn't complain too much about the cold winter. 2019 is almost upon us and this promises to be a fairly momentous year. Why not prepare yourself with the annual carol singing which will be held on Saturday, 22<sup>nd</sup> December 2018 at Sussex Ring, kick-off 4.30pm.

We will again be joined by a couple of members of the St Barnabas choir with drum and guitar and the event would not be complete without the refreshments provided by Vero Caffé, a dash of whiskey for the adults and sweets for the children (all completely free of charge). Last year the rain kept away and it was an outstanding occasion, enjoyed by all denominations, children and adults alike.

As luck would have it, we did not hold the Woodsider Party this year which was just as well because the Old Finchleians Clubhouse was flooded out. But we did hold the Picnic in the Park in July. The weather was hot and England were playing football in the World Cup against Sweden. You can check out what happened on our website. We are going to have to try to organise these events so that they do not clash with other events!

It is with great sadness that I have to announce the demise of the blue spruce in Sussex Ring. It was planted some fifteen years ago and we have watched it grow very, very slowly inch by inch each year. We would lovingly adorn the tree with fairy lights each Christmas but someone or something has killed it off. We are hoping to obtain a replacement before Christmas but the wheels of bureaucracy can move very slowly. As the land is common land and owned by the Council, we are not allowed to plant our own tree.

On the subject of common land, the grass verges in the Suburb are common land and we are apparently allowed to tend to the grass and apply non-invasive weedkiller.

But, what we need to try and prevent is people parking on these grass verges, causing huge ruts in the grass and generally making a completely mess of the area. Most of the offenders tend to be white van man and, ironically, gardeners who, of course, do not live in the area and, therefore, couldn't care less. If you see or employ people who park on the verges, could you please ask them nicely not to do so.

Unsurprisingly, Barnet Council seems to be having a few problems with their Capita outsourcing contracts. This does not just relate to poor services, performance and financial control but also to fraud. The Council's options are somewhat limited but I am reliably informed that they are being sorted out. Don't be surprised though if there is a fairly hefty hike in Council Tax next year.

Is it me or has the suburb become more and more noisy. Gardeners (not them again!) seem to start mowing lawns from eight in the morning, six days a week. Thank goodness they don't work Sundays but that is when everyone else mows their lawn! Having said that, please do not think that I am advocating getting rid of the lawns and flower beds. Far from it! The more greenery the better!

And around where I live, there is a large distressed dog which barks incessantly. I cannot comprehend the minds of people who own a dog like this and then do not seemingly look after it properly.

May I, along with my committee, take this opportunity of wishing everyone in Woodside Park a happy, healthy and brilliant 2019. Goodness knows what is in store for us. I have carefully avoided any comment about Brexit!

I hope to see you all in Sussex Ring at the carol singing on 22<sup>nd</sup> December. Please show your support and be there.

*Robert Shutler*



## CHRISTMAS CAROL SINGING

SATURDAY 22<sup>nd</sup> DECEMBER at 4.30pm  
at Sussex Ring  
CHILDREN ESPECIALLY WELCOME  
Free Refreshments

## Planning Applications

Current planning applications can now be found on our website [www.woodside-park.com](http://www.woodside-park.com).

The Association will continue to resist planning applications which propose to divide any house within the suburb into two or more separate residential units. There are one or two houses where this has been done (illegally) but we are now experiencing planning applications to convert houses into two or more flats. The Suburb is characterised by single dwelling houses and the roads are set out within a setting of single dwelling houses. Increased residential units in the area cause a strain on roads, parking, schools and public services. The loss of single dwelling houses to flats is not appropriate.

The Association will also resist basements which cause massive disruption to adjoining neighbours and, if not correctly constructed, can also cause damage to adjoining buildings. Basement submissions without proper and professional hydrology and soil reports will be resisted at all times. This is required to avoid the catastrophes in some other London Boroughs where basements are causing all sorts of difficulties especially with ground water flow.

The Council does not seem to have a recognised planning policy regarding basements. There are quite a few basement cowboy builders out there – please be aware.

There are plans afoot to build 88 new homes adjacent to Woodside Park Underground Station. These will all be “affordable” (20% off) shoe-box type starter homes mainly aimed at younger folk.

## Finchley War Memorial and Dr French Home

In the past, we have mentioned in the Woodsider about the Finchley War Memorial which is being proposed. I am pleased to say that many generous Woodsiders made contributions to the War Memorial Fund which is to be erected in the grounds of Finchley Memorial hospital. The Memorial is now fully funded and your generosity is much appreciated.

The Dr French Memorial Home which is a charitable old folks home in North Finchley seeks financial assistance to buy some “magic tables” for the elderly folk who suffer from various degrees of dementia and who reside there. They need to raise around £10,000. Any help would be appreciated and a donations page can be found at <http://drfrenchcarehome.co.uk>

## Barnet Council's Future Housing Strategy

On 10 October, Barnet Council's Housing Committee provisionally approved a new draft Housing Strategy for 2019-2024, pending further consultation. The draft Strategy identifies five key themes - raising standards in the private rented sector; delivering more homes that people can afford; safe and secure homes; promoting independence for vulnerable adults in general and tackling homelessness and rough sleeping. All very laudable but there are conflicting projections for housing need which if interpreted one way could mean the construction of 2,600 new homes in one year, but with a different methodology could be interpreted as 2,000 per year. This is the sort of mis-information that seems to emanate from the Mayor's office.

But either way, Barnet is going to become very crowded, very crowded indeed with little or no added infrastructure. A report which can be found on the Council's website outlines the next steps - namely a public consultation on the aims of the draft strategy, followed by a review of responses by the Committee and a further draft to be considered for adoption, at its meeting just around Brexit time in April 2019. It is quite possible that Brexit will have a profound effect on the amount of housing needed in the borough and so, all of these expensive consultations and projections could all be for nothing. Meanwhile, the Council is working on yet another new Local Plan - expected to be adopted in 2020 – while its Assets, Regeneration and Growth Committee is working to prepare a Regeneration Strategy, whatever that means.



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