



The Woodsider

DECEMBER 2021
www.woodside-park.com

Letter from the Chairman – a personal view

We have not delivered a Woodsider since March last year, mainly due to Covid but also because the Woodsiders do appear on our website periodically. There will be a few people who have recently moved into the area who may not even know of our existence. Welcome to you and welcome to the area, please check us out.

The Residents' Association is a pressure group manned by volunteers who try our best to keep Barnet Council on their toes and the Mayor of London at bay but also to maintain a community spirit within this leafy Suburb known as Woodside Park. We are also a member of the Federation of Residents' Association in Barnet (FORAB).

Our latest success is to persuade the council to install adult gym equipment in Riverside Park and for this we have to thank our local Councillors Alison Cornelius and Caroline Stock (the ex-Mayor of Barnet and the current Mayor of Barnet) for their assistance. I hope everyone will utilise the equipment so that Woodside Park can be the fittest Suburb in the capital!! We are still applying pressure to have the path by Dollis Brook repaired in Riverside Park but we are meeting a good deal of bureaucratic resistance which will, presumably, only relent when someone has a serious accident. That is the way of the UK I suppose.

Once again, this year (unless there is another lockdown) I am pleased to announce that we will be holding our annual carol singing on Saturday, 18th December 2021 at Sussex Ring, kick-off 4.30pm.

We are privileged to be joined by members of the St Barnabas choir with drum, organ 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). We need some cheering up and this occasion which lasts thirty minutes or so marks the arrival of the festive times.

Even if the weather is a bit damp, it is always an outstanding occasion, enjoyed by all denominations, children (especially) and adults alike and was last time attended by a hundred people or more. It is also a fantastic opportunity to meet your neighbours, Father Christmas, local dignitaries and fellow Woodsiders. I hope to see you there.

Houses in the Suburb are being constantly extended, upwards, sideways (not downwards as yet although there are a couple of examples). Essentially, this is "progress" and extending homes has been made easier by permitted development. All we ask, however, is that, if you are extending your home, can you please not do this on a Sunday when most people would like some respite from the noise, dirt and fumes caused by the building works. This is called respecting your neighbour's peace.

The Association will strongly object to any planning application which attempts to turn houses into flats. There is a balancing act. It is a question of weighing the need for new homes against the "harm" a flat development scheme in a suburb full of family houses may cause to its surroundings. It is important that we are not all crammed into smaller and smaller spaces, for our mental health if nothing else. The large Homebase scheme at North Finchley was refused by the Council and rejected on appeal. More about this overleaf.

I regret to have to report that there are still quite a few burglaries and, in particular, car thefts taking place around the suburb at the moment. The police seem incapable of solving these crimes even when they are given irrefutable evidence such as film from various cameras around the area and on doorbells. Keep observant and please be careful out there.

May I, along with my committee, take this opportunity of wishing everyone in Woodside Park a happy, healthy, Covid-free, brilliant and successful 2022.

I hope to see you all in Sussex Ring at the carol singing on 18th December. Please show your support and be there.

Robert Shutler

CHRISTMAS CAROL SINGING

SATURDAY 18th DECEMBER at 4.30pm
at Sussex Ring
CHILDREN ESPECIALLY WELCOME
Free Refreshments



Planning Matters

Current planning applications in Woodside Park can now be found on our website www.woodside-park.com.

A huge development of 307 homes was planned at the "Homebase" site in North Finchley. This comprised six blocks of flats ranging from four to nine storeys in height. It was roundly refused by Barnet Council and the refusal was upheld on appeal. Although the site is ripe for development and, indeed, will eventually be developed, the design quality of the proposed development was "mediocre and systemic change is needed to ensure design and beauty is a core of the planning process". Good design is a bit in the mind of the beholder but Barnet planners have said that good design, whilst contemporary in appearance should also appropriately reflect traditional features of the conservation area and neighbouring built form.

The proposals for the huge 1500 flat development proposed at Finchley Central underground station and others by the Mayor of London might like to take note of the above decision. Initially, the proposal for Finchley Central was dropped but it has been resurrected by the Mayor of London with different developers. The effect that this development would have on Finchley Central and all surrounding areas would be devastating. The residents' association is very much against this proposal.

Pavements

The Council seem to have been a bit lax with cleaning leaves from pavements this year. Be very careful, because the leaves become very slippery in the wet weather and if you fall over on the pavement, this can hurt.

Grass verges are a real treat in Woodside Park. The Estate was designed with the grass verges and trees in mind. The trees used to be part of a large orchard which covered the area. Most of the fruit trees are now gone and been replaced with cherry trees, birch and ash. With the advent of home deliveries, lorries and vans park on the verges causing them to become a muddy quagmire and a couple of trees have also been knocked over in the Suburb. If you see these vans parking on the grass verges, can you ask them nicely not to do so. These van drivers are under immense pressure to deliver as many parcels as possible in the shortest space of time and they really don't have time to care about our verges. But we do ...

Crime

Barnet is ranked 9th lowest amongst the 32 London boroughs for all recorded crime. However, we must remain cautious and take the necessary precautions in order to safeguard our homes and our area. Based on 'anecdotal' evidence, the key concerns of residents are (not in priority order): scams (phone, emails, doorstep), anti-social behavior, vehicle crime (incl catalytic converter thefts) and burglaries.

Some streets within our area have setup a WhatsApp group in order to share information amongst neighbours. These WhatsApp groups have been found to be particularly useful in cases of anti-social behavior, house alarms going off, vehicle crime, or simply to seek help on household issues.

Furthermore, the Neighbourhood Watch - Online Watch Link (OWL) www.owl.co.uk/ provides regular updates of crime occurrences in the area, as well as guidance in regards to preventative actions each of us can take to remain safe and vigilant. To receive regular updates, please enter your post code and register your email address on the website..



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