

View south-west from Potters Bar. All the fields as far as the M25 could be built over

Developers have Green Belt in their sights

Hertsmere Council recently consulted on the possibility of building up to 2,620 new homes plus new places of work between the M25 and Potters Bar, westwards as far as South Mimms and eastwards beyond junction 24. This would have a huge impact on our Green Belt, writes Robin Bishop

To meet the housing crisis, particularly in London and the South-East, the government is requiring every local authority to meet new house-building targets. Hertsmere have responded by considering 28 large sites and many more smaller ones. Barnet Council may do something similar when it launches its own draft Local Plan this February.

Although the Green Belt on our side of the M25 is not seriously threatened – yet – we have to be constantly on our guard. Any new building on it sets a precedent

that developers are happy to exploit. The identity of Chipping Barnet, which is surrounded on three sides by Green Belt, is potentially at risk.

That is why the Barnet Society recently opposed – successfully – a new warehouse on Green Belt land at 127 Barnet Road (the former Cottage Garden Nursery). That is also why we have reservations about a new community and sports hub in the middle of Barnet Playing Fields.

So we responded to Hertsmere's consultation. Our main comments were as follows.

The Green Belt principle

The Barnet Society opposes development of the Green Belt on principle. Not only has it prevented ribbon development between Barnet, Potters Bar and other Hertfordshire settlements, thereby

preserving their cohesion and identity, but it has saved lovely countryside north and south of the M25 for the benefit of residents, travellers and wildlife. Its openness has been enhanced by the lack of roadside development along the M25.

Having said that, we recognise that some development may be justifiable under exceptional circumstances. Unarguably today's housing needs across London and the South-East are exceptional, and we broadly accept that a substantial amount of new building is necessary. But much of this could and should be accommodated on brownfield sites. Only as a last resort should building on the Green Belt be considered – and then only in the least obtrusive places, properly planned, and designed to high design and environmental standards.

Continued on Page 2

INSIDE:

Page 3: Council pledges to remove rough sleepers from the library

Page 6: Work on Noah's Ark Children's Hospice is proceeding according to schedule after successful £11m fundraising

Page 7: Children have reminded their adult counterparts about the importance of keeping the streets and parks free of litter

Threat to Green Belt from housebuilding

Continued from Page 1

Land between the M25 and Potters Bar

Most of us know this fine stretch of countryside, if only from driving up the A1(M) or the A1000/Great North Road, to shop at Colney Fields or Crews Hill.

1. Together the three sites provide a magnificent green buffer between Potters Bar and Barnet. Not only are PB1 & PB3 virtually continuous, being separated only by the grounds of Dame Alice Owen's School, they connect visually with the fields and trees of Bentley Heath, Dancers Hill, Wrotham Park, Dyrham Park and other stretches of Green Belt to create a panorama that is much greater than the sum of its parts. Its loss would be irreparable and deplorable.

2. The southern sides of these sites are dominated by the M25 visually, aurally and in terms of pollution. It already impacts adversely on existing houses on the southern edge of Potters Bar. It would have a much worse impact on any homes or work premises built closer to it, which is unlikely to be mitigated even by dense planting screens.

3. By minimising – or abolishing altogether – the gap between Potters Bar and the M25, the town's distinct

identity from the south will be lost. The Baker Street and Barnet Road motorway bridges would make dismal gateways to the expanded town.

4. The value of PB1 & PB3 is enhanced because they are in mainly agricultural use. These are working landscapes – with the visual charm that brings – which require large fields. Eating into them will reduce their efficiency and threaten the future viability of farming there. We risk losing their economic and visual diversity for ever.

5. In Barnet we already suffer from road and parking congestion caused at least partly by the rising number of commuters from Hertfordshire into London. Building new homes and workplaces near our border seems certain to exacerbate that.

6. New homes near Barnet are likely to be cheaper and more spacious, internally and externally, than in Barnet itself. They are bound to attract young couples and families struggling to afford property in our area.

It would be bitterly ironic if much of Hertsmere's new housing ended up benefitting Londoners at the expense of its own residents.

Hertsmere states that growth would be in the form of 'garden suburbs', but this a

vague and misleading label. It could mean simply villas or semi-detached houses with gardens, without any overall vision, like most pre-war suburban sprawl.

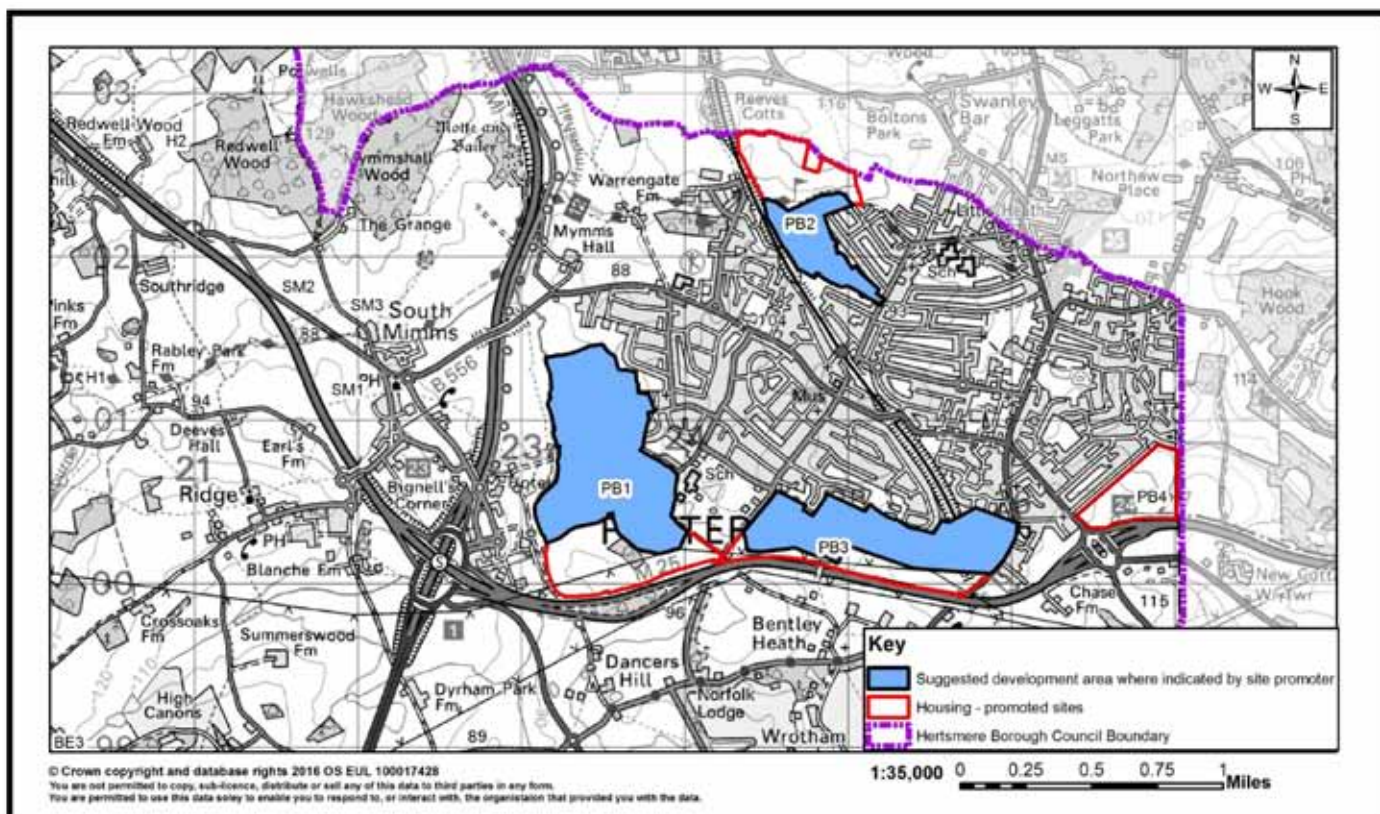
As invented by Victorian and Edwardian planners and architects at exemplary developments such as Bedford Park, Hampstead Garden Suburb, and Letchworth and Welwyn Garden Cities, 'garden suburbs' meant mixed and well-planned communities. Fundamental to their success was their range of work, retail, educational, health and recreational facilities, built around excellent road and rail connections.

If parts of the Green Belt have to be sacrificed, it must only be to similarly imaginative plans.

These would tie development on sites PB1, PB3 & PB4 (see map below) tightly into Potters Bar, with transport and other infrastructural improvements benefitting existing, as well as future, residents and workers.

Without such a plan, Hertsmere risks generating land value and profits for outsiders at the expense of its own communities and beautiful landscapes.

You can comment on this issue on our website: www.barnetsociety.org.uk



Green Belt sites PB1, 2 & 4 on the map could be built over under the proposals

Council pledge on rough sleepers

Barnet Council has promised to remove homeless men who bed down each night in alcoves outside Chipping Barnet Library in Stapylton Road, writes Nick Jones

After an angry residents' forum meeting inside the library – when residents pleaded for action against anti-social behaviour – the Barnet Society took the forum chairman and vice chairman, Councillors Lisa Rutter and Alison Cornelius, outside the building to show where one of the rough sleepers had laid out his sleeping bag.

Residents accused Barnet Council of abandoning High Barnet and failing to take any steps to tackle street drinkers and rough sleepers who congregate outside the library, in the High Street and Church Passage.

Councillor Rutter gave an undertaking that action would be taken across council departments to deal with the rough sleepers' encampments outside the library and also on the grassy slope beside the Spires shopping centre bus stops and in shop doorways along the High Street.

"What is happening with the homeless is very sad to see. We want homeless people to get help, but we must take action and firm up the council's response.

"We will inform Barnet Residents Association on what can be done to improve liaison with the Police and co-ordinate action by the Safer Neighbourhood Team," said Councillor Rutter.

A petition calling for action to stop rough sleepers gathering around the library was presented to the meeting by the Association's representative, Gordon Massey, who said that nearby residents in Carnarvon Road were at their wits end because of rising anti-social behaviour which included men urinating and defecating in the bushes in the library gardens.

There were usually at least three homeless men sleeping there each night, but during the day they attracted up to half a dozen street drinkers who were intimidating young mothers when taking their children to school.



Homeless men spend the day – and often the night – in High Street shop doorways

"Local residents are sympathetic to the men's plight, and some do give them bedding and money, and efforts have been made to entice them away, but they are resistant to being helped and prefer to stay where they are.

"They moved to the library when an exclusion order was issued for the bus stop area, and all they had to do was move fifty yards across the road. This has been going on for months."

Mr Massey was immediately backed by several Carnarvon Road residents. One demanded action: "We live opposite and my three and six-year-old boys can't look at the men, especially when street drinkers join them, and they all hang around in an intimidating way."

Another nearby resident said she had spoken to the men and they had explained how they'd become homeless.

"We get six or seven of them in the day and they are all drunk by 8am in the morning. Sometimes they carry on drinking all day until 2 or 3am in the morning. It's become a community no-go area."

When challenged over the council's failure to take legal action to evict rough sleepers from council land, Councillor Rutter promised she would speak personally to the council's strategic director for the environment.

A second petition from Barnet Residents Association, presented by Ken Rowland, called for improvements in street cleaning in the High Street and adjoining



Councillors Lisa Rutter (left) and Alison Cornelius examining a sleeping area of one of the rough sleepers outside Chipping Barnet Library

roads. Mr Rowland praised the efforts of High Barnet's dedicated street sweeper but said there was no street cleaning at all in some of the roads adjoining the High Street.

He was supported by Mr Massey who asked Councillor Rutter why High Barnet was never visited by the council's pavement washing machine. "There are terrible stains on the High Street pavement." He also called on the council to replace the High Street's rusty and broken cast iron refuse bins with bins of a more functional design.

Councillor Rutter promised she would ask the relevant council departments to see what could be done to improve the High Street.

She gave a similar undertaking to examine complaints about renewed fly tipping along St Albans Road.

Mr Rowland said action had been promised last September but St Albans Road was in a worse state than ever with the verges littered with old fridges, three-piece suites, mattresses and builders waste.

Planning and Environment report

Sunset View appeal is test case for the Society as we nominated it for Barnet's Local List. If the appeal is upheld, it will undermine a basic principle of a Conservation Area

Robin Bishop writes:



No major new projects have come forward since the last Newsletter, and recent major applications seem stuck in the planning pipeline – but we've been kept busy.

Ones to watch

High Street pedestrian improvements

– The good news is that these seem likely to go ahead once Virgin have laid their broadband cable in February. Less good news is that it will be late in the season to plant the trees, and that other details have not yet been agreed – for example, where to place benches and Battle of Barnet information boards (for which the Barnet Museum has succeeded in raising funds).

Whalebones estate – We met the developer again in December, and an exhibition of the proposed housing and public park is due to be held in February (See separate article, Page 5).

Hertsmere Council has consulted on building up to 2,620 new homes between the M25 and Potters Bar, from South Mimms to beyond Junction 24. This would have a huge impact on our Green Belt, and we have objected forcefully (see Page 5).

Other casework highlights:

Approved

When I Grow Up, 204 High Street – We supported this imaginative proposal for a family hub for 'pre-schoolers and their grown-ups' in one of Statons' redundant premises.

Moxon & Tapster Street (fka Royal British Legion) – Fifth time lucky for the developer!

Refused

141-143 High Street – We objected once again to four stories of offices and flats behind these shops. The planning committee agreed.

127 Barnet Road (fka Cottage Garden Nursery) – An application was made to replace a greenhouse in the Green Belt with a warehouse twice its volume. We strongly objected, and the committee threw it out.

No1 Station Road – The refusal of this proposed makeover was a surprise. Next to New Barnet Station seems a good place for 63 flats, and even hardcore fans of Brutalism would find it hard to love this redundant office block in its present state.

Awaiting a decision

151-153 High Street – The Bentley showroom and garage would be replaced by two shops and seven homes. We have mixed views on this. It's in the Monken Hadley Conservation Area, and while



Proposed frontage of 151-153 High Street

we welcome removal of the incongruous projecting showroom and restoration of the nationally listed No151, we have doubts about the quality of the restoration and the modern idiom of both the front extension and the rebuilt No153.

Brake Shear House site (164 High Street) – We're neutral about the 68 flats proposed.

50 St Albans Road (fka The White Lion) – We don't have a problem with converting this former pub to a car rental office with parking behind, but have objected to the demolition of the former stables. This is a locally listed building, and horses were a fundamental to the original coaching inn's purpose.

Marie Foster Home site, Wood Street – We supported this 100-place care home.

Meadow Works site, Pricklers Hill – We objected to 57 homes on this site.

Gone to appeal

1 Sunset View – A test case for the Society. We nominated the house for Barnet's Local List, and if the appeal is upheld it will undermine the basic principle of a Conservation Area. We have submitted further arguments against the planned changes to the Inspectorate.

Appeal dismissed

Fern Room site, Salisbury Road – The Inspector considered the design harmful to the character of the area. Its balconies would be 'alien' and its high proportion of glazing 'brash and visually jarring'.

Council news

Local List – The Council's updated list of buildings of architectural or historic significance has been delayed by shortage of planning resources.

Consultations – Our Committee is preparing responses to the Council's Draft Housing Strategy, Draft Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy, and its review of Capita's contracts (which include Barnet's planning, regeneration and highways departments – all crucial to the quality of our buildings and environment). You can comment at <https://engage.barnet.gov.uk/>.

Trees

The Council tells us that around 20 more trees will be planted on Barnet Hill in February in consultation with our Vice President, David Lee.



View of the surviving stables behind The White Lion

Whalebones plan revised ahead of application

A woodland walkway, a healing garden and children's play area are among the latest proposals for inclusion in the fields and woods that make up the Whalebones estate in Wood Street, Barnet, where developers are proposing to build around 150 new homes

Revised plans for the redevelopment were presented at a public meeting in early February in preparation for an application to Barnet Council for planning approval.

Trustees for the Whalebones estate – one of High Barnet's much-loved green spaces between Wood Street and Barnet Hospital – have been working with Waltham Abbey housebuilders Hill on proposals for the construction of houses and flats in the farmland directly opposite the Arkley public house.

To offset approval for the new housing – in the 7.6-acre field beside the new Elmbank development – the trustees intend to create two areas of parkland and a woodland walkway open to the public with access from Wood Street and Wellhouse Lane.

After holding a series of consultations in recent months with local residents and community groups, Hill's planning design manager, Jeremy Thurlby, told the Barnet Society that their design work was almost complete.

However, the architects, Pollard Thomas Edwards, were keen to hear reaction, and would amend their proposals where possible.

Mr Thurlby said Hill believed they had responded to issues that had caused concern.

- The number of new homes to be constructed has been reduced from around 170 to 180 to "just over 150" with a mix of houses of two to two-and-a-half storeys in height and blocks of flats of three to three-and-a-half storeys.



A new roundabout would be built beside the Arkley public house to give access to a new housing estate planned for the farmland around Whalebones



Well Cottage, at the top of Wellhouse Lane, which is the home of Whalebones tenant farmer Peter Mason, would retain sufficient land for rearing geese and poultry. Originally two cottages, dating back to around 1650, it was the home of well keepers who supplied water for the horses of the carters and drovers who stopped off in Barnet when taking hay and forage into London or when leaving with loads of horse manure and ash.

- Space has been found to relocate the geese and poultry reared by Peter Mason who has a life-time tenancy of the small agricultural holding that is next door to the original Whalebones house (which is privately owned and is not part of the development).

- Another breakthrough has been to secure the support of a specialist charitable group, the Land Trust, which is prepared to take on the ownership and management of parkland and woodland walkway and would guarantee continued public access.

The largest area of public parkland would be in the field closest to the Wood Street-Wellhouse Lane junction.

This would include what Hill describe as a healing garden, laid out with shrubs and benches, and would provide what Mr Thurlby hoped would be a quiet sitting area for patients and visitors to Barnet Hospital.

Another attraction would be a children's play area – for children in the 6 to 12 age range – which would be laid out in a woodland setting, perhaps with logs for climbing and other equipment.

The land proposed for rearing geese and poultry would face on to Wellhouse Lane next to Well Cottage, the home of Peter Mason and his wife Jill.

He has been farming the land around Whalebones since 1962. The late Gwyneth Cowing, former owner of the estate, granted him a lifetime tenancy of

the farm in her will. Next door, further down Wellhouse Lane, the trustees are proposing to construct a new community building in the form of two timber-clad, barn-like structures to provide a studio for the Barnet Guild of Artists and separate facilities for the Barnet Beekeepers Association.

A short access road – opposite the Wellhouse Lane bus terminus – would lead to a small car park for the artists and beekeepers and turn into a cul-de-sac serving a group of five houses.

Entry to the main estate of new houses and flats in the farmland beside the Linden Homes development at Elmbank would be via an access road leading off a new roundabout to be constructed in front of the Arkley public house at the junction of Wood Street, Barnet Road and Galley Lane.



Revised plans for developing the farm land around Whalebones were outlined to the Barnet Society. From left to right, Robin Bishop (chair); Alexis Butterfield, associate partner, Pollard Thomas Edwards; Jeremy Thurlby, planning design manager, Hill; and Markus Geiger, architectural adviser to the society.

Alexis Butterfield, associate partner of Pollard Thomas Edwards, said the estate of new homes had been pushed further back from the main road in order to provide extra space for an expanded hedgerow and line of trees along the northern boundary.

"There is an 11-metre drop in the land from Wood Street to Wellhouse Lane and the higher buildings are staggered down the slope so that houses visible from the main road would be no more than one-and-a-half storeys high.

"All parking – except for visitors – would be in basements under the houses and flats, and the access road into the new estate would be a cul-de-sac with no access to Wellhouse Lane."

It's all plain sailing for Noah's Ark

The children's hospice is well on its way to completion after a successful fundraising campaign that has topped £11 million, which will be enough to finish construction



Jimmy Miller takes a break from the work at the Noah's Ark site in Byng Road

Noah's Ark Children's Hospice is rapidly reaching completion in the grounds of the nature reserve maintained by Barnet Environment Centre in Byng Road, Barnet.

Next April, staff and support workers hope to move into what is promised will be a state-of-the-art children's hospice serving north London and Hertsmere. The official opening is provisionally timed for July.

NOAH'S ARK CURRENTLY PROVIDES HELP FOR MORE THAN 200 CHILDREN ACROSS FIVE LONDON BOROUGH: BARNET, ENFIELD, CAMDEN, ISLINGTON, HARINGEY, AND ALSO HERTSMERE

Fund raising for the hospice has been sustained, innovative and remarkably successful.

Donations have already topped £11 million, enough to finish construction, and well on the way to meeting the original estimate of £12 million for both construction and fitting out.

Many more fund-raisers are planned for 2019 to help finance the running of the new hospice and to support the charity's work.

Among high-profile events in the New Year will be charity giving around

Tottenham Hotspur Premier League games.

Noah's Ark is the club's official charity partner and the Spurs' midfielder Dele Alli paid a surprise visit to Vale School, Tottenham, to see a 14-year-old pupil with Down's syndrome who is supported by Noah's Ark.

Noah's Ark currently provides help for well over 200 children across five London boroughs, Barnet, Enfield, Camden, Islington, Haringey, and also Hertsmere, and the aim is to expand the existing hospice-at-home services to cater for over 1,200 children with life-threatening or life-limiting conditions.

The new hospice will provide 24-hour end-of-life, post-death and bereavement care; overnight stays; and sensory music and art rooms, plus specialised care for new-born babies.

Dr Rachel Black, Noah's Ark's director of

care, has stressed repeatedly their wish to provide more end-of-life choice for children and at last the charity will have a drop-in centre for families and their children and the chance to help children live their lives to the fullest for as long as possible.

Leading off from the main reception area will be a wing with six children's bedrooms; a wing with three family rooms for visitors, and nursery facilities; a wing with therapy play areas with soft and wet games, and a children's den; and a wing providing offices for the charity. Noah's Ark will share the 7.5-acre nature reserve managed by the Barnet Environment Centre and landscaping will be a key feature once construction is completed.

Outdoor spaces will include a play zone and sensory, contemplating and therapeutic gardens.

A special feature of the new hospice, which has already won two architectural design awards, is an environmentally-friendly green roof

The prospect within the next few months of moving into the new hospice was high on the agenda at a recent reception for Noah's Ark at 10 Downing Street attended by five families, specialist carers and donors.

Ru Watkins, the charity's chief executive, promised that the Ark would be a hub of collaboration where NHS partners, third sector providers and the community would be working together with Noah's Ark to meet an ever-growing population of babies, children and young people who are suffering life-limiting and life-threatening conditions.



Work is nearing completion on Noah's Ark Children's Hospice in Byng Road.

Church hopes children will pick up a good habit and pass it on with DIY litter campaign

“Don’t be mean, keep Barnet clean” is the message on posters which have been appearing outside parks and on street signs around Barnet in a DIY campaign by children, writes Nick Jones

Members of the Pilots children’s club at the United Reform Church in Chesterfield Road have been producing the posters under the direction on their captain, Gill Cunnington.

Their original drawings and captions are featured on the posters which all vary in their design, but which could not be clearer in the messages the children are trying to convey.

“Clean up after your dog! The poo fairy doesn’t live here! Scoop your poop! Bag it, tie it, bin it! Why don’t you re-use old sofas, beds and chairs. Don’t put them on the street. Take them to the dump.”

Ms Cunnington, who has been captain of the Chesterfield Road Pilots club for the last eight years, said she was amazed how keen the children were once she came up with the project and thought up the slogan, “Don’t be mean, keep Barnet clean”

“The children, who are aged seven to eleven, are really thoughtful about the litter they see around them.

“They told me they think the pavements and streets in Barnet are all very mucky, with too much dog poo, broken glass and empty cans.

“They go to other places in London that are clean, and they see street sweepers



Gill Cunnington, who has been instrumental in setting up the Keeping Barnet Clean campaign



Getting the message out: children from the Pilots club make their views on litter abundantly clear

at work, and they can’t understand why they don’t see any street sweepers in Barnet.

“So, we all set to work. I found lots of Keep Tidy images which we cut out, and then they wrote the messages underneath.

“When it came to fly tipping, the young

ones didn’t understand what we meant, so the older children explained it to them.

“What they said to me, which is very true, is that there aren’t anywhere near enough litter bins in Barnet.

“There’s only one outside Underhill School in Mays Lane, when the children say there should be many more bins than that.”

Messages of encouragement for Ms Cunnington, who is a part-time support worker for Age UK, have been posted on the Nextdoor High Barnet community website thanking her for her initiative and for the flair and imagination the children have shown in their keep Barnet tidy campaign.

She says that after the Pilots started producing the posters, she was determined that local residents were made aware of what the children think, so they started fastening them to fences around Barnet.

“We are trying to get the message across that it is important to love where you live.”

The do-it-yourself initiative to keep Barnet clean could not be more topical in view of repeated complaints about the tipping and dumping of rubbish in St Albans Road (opposite Old Fold Manor Golf Club) and along Galley Lane.

Piles of builders’ rubbish lie alongside abandoned tyres, fridges, mattresses, old clothes and other assorted detritus.



One of the children’s posters beside a street sign

Seeking common ground on our footpaths

There is a strong fear that any path that came into existence before 1949 and is not entered into the definitive footpath map, due to be finalised by 2026, will be lost forever

Efforts are underway to identify and map the many alleyways and footpaths that add so much to the local landscape and help make High Barnet such an attractive place to live.

Heading off down one of the innumerable cut-throughs or paths around the town often opens up views of an unexpected vista looking across to Totteridge Valley, the Green Belt or Hadley Green.

Given its long history as a market and coaching town, residents can make use of a rich heritage of alleyways close to the High Street.

High Barnet and other communities in the area also benefit from the proximity of an extensive network of footpaths through the surrounding countryside, including the Dollis Valley Walk, Pymmes Trail, London Loop and Capital Ring.

During the last twelve months the Barnet Society, together with the local Ramblers group and other societies, has been working to ensure that these footpaths are identified and recorded.

The importance of this work is highlighted by the fear that any path that came into existence before 1949, and is not entered into the definitive footpath map, will be lost forever.

The cut-off date for adding historic paths to the official record of rights of way in a local authority area is 1 January 2026.

Frances Wilson, who has been co-ordinating the Barnet Society's response, says the significance of this exercise should not be minimised.



“When a path is on the definitive map, it not only means we have a right to walk on it, but it's much easier to protect and maintain.”



Representatives of the Barnet Footpaths Group have recently had a meetings with the Council and have contributed recommendations for the draft of the local implementation plan to encourage the development of walking links across the borough



Consultation on a draft of the implementation plan -- available on line at <https://engage.barnet.gov.uk/Transport> -- closed on December 9 and once responses have been assessed, including those of the Barnet Society, the implementation plan will be submitted to Transport for London to gain funding



Walk this way: one of the many paths that help make Barnet such an attractive place to live

from money allocated by the Mayor of London for projects that support the Mayor's transport strategy.

Barnet Council's objective is to secure approval for a three-year programme of investment starting in the next financial year.

Frances Wilson says the next task for the Barnet Footpaths Group is to produce a map of footpaths and alleyways across the borough, with particular emphasis on historic routes.

“This will enable us to identify networks of walking routes linking with work, schools and public transport that should be prioritised for development, in addition to interesting leisure routes.

“There is a possibility of getting funding for small projects on a short time timescale, even within this financial year.

“An example could be drainage and soft surfacing of the permissive path running alongside Folly Brook to Southover by the Woodside Park Club, linking to Michleham Down and Chanctonbury Way.”

If Barnet Council could be encouraged to produce a separate Rights of Way Improvement Plan – a step which the Ramblers believe should have been prepared a decade ago – it would help with the delivery of improved footpaths.

Suggestions for historic ways that should be prioritised or local links that could be improved should be emailed to hnmtdontloseyourway@gmail.com

Physic Well benefits from a modern-day makeover

Barnet's historic wellhouse, beloved by diarist Samuel Pepys, whose waters he found most refreshing, has been reopened by the Mayor of Barnet after months of restoration work that included new tiles and oak timbers, writes Nick Jones

Barnet's historic wellhouse, which has one of the best-preserved medicinal wells in the country, has been restored to its full mock-Tudor glory. After months of restoration work, which has included a replacement roof of hand-made clay tiles and repairs to the oak timbers, the physic well was officially reopened by the Mayor of Barnet, Councillor Reuben Thompstone.

The wellhouse, in Well Approach – just a short walk from Barnet Hospital – was constructed in 1937 to protect the 17th century dis-used well and its spring.

In recent years the structure, which has grade II listed status, was in such a sorry state of disrepair that it was placed on Historic England's at-risk register.

The cost of the restoration work, originally estimated at £150,000, was met by Barnet Council, a grant from Historic England and a donation from the Heritage of London Trust.

The renowned diarist Samuel Pepys – who visited the well in July 1664 – was perhaps the most celebrated consumer of the chalybeate spring water that was once fashionable to drink, and which attracted the gentry to Barnet because it was said to have healing and other medicinal qualities.

Following completion of the restoration work, Barnet Council intends to pass control of the wellhouse to Barnet Museum on a 50-year lease.

Once legal procedures have been completed, the museum intends to arrange regular opening times so that the public, interested groups, and school parties can see inside the wellhouse and descend the steps to the well which is still fed by clear spring water.

Mike Jordan, chairman of the museum's trustees, said they hope to have the wellhouse ready for opening

to the public on the third Saturday in February – and it would then be open on the third Saturday of every month until November.

“Our aim is to have additional open days for special interest groups, schools and for Samuel Pepys appreciation societies around the world which have all expressed an interest in seeing the well which Pepys visited and which he described in his diaries.”

The first mention of the discovery of Barnet's spring was in 1586 in William Camden's book Britannica. In 1650, there were reports of the Barnet water being over-exploited and in 1656 the Barnet Vestry appointed a well-keeper.

Samuel Pepys “rode north to see the wells” in July 1664, and after lunch at the Red Lion he continued to the well “and there I drunk three glasses and went and walked and came back and



The restoration work proved more costly than originally estimated because of the extent of rotten timbers and crumbling brickwork

drunk two more”.

“The woman would have had me drunk three more, but I could not, my belly being full – but this wrought me very well; and so, we rode home... and my waters working at least seven or eight times upon the road, which



The cost of the restoration, in excess of £150,000, was met by the council, a grant from Historic England and a donation from the Heritage Trust of London

pleased me well.”

In 1667, Pepys visited the well a second time when he “took only three glasses of well water” before retiring to the Red Lion, where he “ate some of the best cheese cakes I ever did eat in my life.”

Mr Jordan said the work had proved more costly than was originally estimated because of the extent of rotten timbers and crumbling brickwork. When the ceiling collapsed, there was additional work, but traditional materials had been used throughout.

In addition to a new roof made up of old-fashioned clay tiles, there was new replacement brickwork and French oak had to be used because of a shortage of English oak.

Internal improvements include repairs to the twelve steps to the well, a new handrail, new lighting and repairs to the wellhouse floor.

Originally the well was on what was once Barnet Common, which stretched from Wood Street to Dollis Valley, and the mock-Tudor wellhouse was constructed when Barnet Urban District Council acquired the land and built the Wellhouse estate of council houses.



Having a peep: Physic Well open day queue. Plans are afoot to open the well more often

Prominent publican raises cash in legal fight to force owners to give a fairer deal to tied houses

Gary Murphy, landlord at one of High Barnet's highly-rated real ale pubs, the Mitre, is preparing for the next round of a campaign to force the pub owners to give publicans of tied houses a fairer deal when it comes to rents and the price and choice of beers, writes Nick Jones

Since taking on what was then a loss-making pub ten years ago, Mr Murphy has won many concessions from his pub company and has made a success of the Mitre.

He believes he can now try help 15,000 tied publicans across the country who are struggling financially because of exorbitant rents and additional beer charges.

Already Mr Murphy has raised pledges totalling £11,000 in a national crowdfunding appeal to fight exploitation by the pub companies. He is now ready, if necessary, to take the Pubs Code Adjudicator to court.

The issue at stake is the way the pub companies are interpreting the 2016 Pubs Code, which was introduced in Parliament to allow landlords and landladies the chance to break free of the beer tie – a safeguard that Mr Murphy believes the Pubs Code Adjudicator should be doing much more to enforce.

“The crowdfunding appeal is not directed at my customers as they support us enough by coming to the Mitre – this is a national fundraiser to try to deliver fairness for all publicans.

“I have become involved because I experienced first-hand how the pub companies and the Adjudicator are making it so difficult for landlords and landladies to go free of tie.

“Whilst the rent remains very high on the Mitre, we have negotiated lots of freedoms on beers and we remain a popular community destination.

“It is critical that all individual landlords and landladies obtain a fair deal from their pub companies so they

can run their pubs with originality and with the local community in mind, they can preserve the original features of historic pubs like the Mitre and offer their customers a wide choice of products from large and small brewers”.

Mr Murphy can undoubtedly speak for fellow publicans with some authority: the Mitre has 18 draught products on the bar, including eight traditional real ales and three modern craft beers, and 70 per cent of the pub's sales are for beer, a far higher ratio than for most licensed premises.

The Mitre has regular beer deliveries – in fact it sells 700 brewers' barrels a year, compared with an average for 200-300 barrels for the typical pub.

The Mitre's success is also a result of Mr Murphy's tenacity. When he took it on after 21 years in the civil service the pub was losing money. He has worked hard to build the pub up and negotiate better terms on his lease, first with Punch Taverns and more recently with the current freeholders, Greene King.

“At one point the pub company was charging me three times what I would consider to be a fair rent, including a significant cost for beer – for example, beer I could get on the open market for £100 was costing me £175.



The Mitre has been a feature of the High Street since the 17th Century

Lion, and before that the Albion in Union Street and the Crown and Anchor.

“I know how tough it is for pub landlords in Barnet and elsewhere. Most of them are tied houses on short-term leases and they too are being forced to buy from brewers at sometimes double the price they could pay on the open market.

“What so annoyed me in my fight for better terms for the Mitre, was that since 2016 landlords and landladies have just met obfuscation from the pub companies, they frustrate the Pubs Code and the Pubs Code Adjudicator is not doing enough to resolve it.

“If the Adjudicator won't act on our behalf, then the landlords and lawyers who back this campaign are prepared to look at an individual or class action and



Gary Murphy: 'We have to protect the culture of social drinking. Pubs like the Mitre provide a community space'

“I am very lucky. I have negotiated better terms and I do have a lease until 2027 and the option to renew for another 20 years, but most tied landlords and landladies have a far worse deal which is why so many of them are going out of business.

“Since I took over the Mitre in 2008, we've lost a few local pubs. The Alexandra, the White Lion, the Old Red

go to court.

“We've asked for support from our MP, Theresa Villiers, and she has taken this up with the pubs minister, Kelly Tolhurst.

“We have to protect the culture of social drinking. Pubs like the Mitre provide a community space and there is no way that this should be jeopardised for higher and higher profits for the pub companies.”

Barnet Band benefits from a fair wind

The High Barnet Foresters' Brass Band, which started performing in 1889 – with just 15 instruments that had cost £42 – is celebrating its 130th anniversary, replete with wind section, **writes Nick Jones**

A special concert to mark the event was held at St James Church, New Barnet, and the evening's repertoire reflected the rejuvenation of one of Barnet's oldest musical groups – a transformation that began in the 1980s when because of a declining number of brass band players, the decision was taken to welcome wind players. **Nick Jones writes**

Barnet Band, now a community-based wind band (www.barnetband.org), has a playing strength of 30 to 40 musicians and gives regular concerts around Barnet and supports local charities.

The 130th anniversary concert, in aid of Cherry Lodge Cancer Care of Barnet, featured a selection of music from the past 13 decades including marches, music from shows and films, wind band classics, the premiere of a piece especially commissioned for the concert, and a performance by Cherry Lodge Singers.

Sue Dunn, Barnet Band secretary, said their reinvention in the 1980s as a wind band, welcoming clarinet, flute, saxophone and bassoon players, had given the group a new lease of life.

“During the summer, we play at fetes, community events, and bandstands, while Christmas sees us participating in Barnet's Christmas Fair. We also give concerts for local charities and over the years have been privileged to help many worthy causes.

“The band is a not-for-profit organisation run by its members, and as



Barnet Band and its conductor Ian Brookman at a recent concert

a community wind band, we accept new members without audition, and we don't ask for grades.

“We are currently seeking clarinets and brass players. So, if you play a clarinet, tuba, trombone, French horn, euphonium or trumpet and fancy playing in a friendly community band, give us a try. We aim for our rehearsals – on Wednesday evenings – to be fun.”

The band was established by the Court Pride of Barnet Foresters on 31 January 1889 and its history provides a fascinating insight into the growth and excellence of brass bands.

Its first musical director was Corporal Yeomans and the 7th Kings Royal Rifle Corps and the first engagement for the High Barnet Foresters' Brass Band was at the Green Man in March 1889.

George Byford succeeded Corporal Yeomans in 1895 and continued as conductor – at a salary of three shillings a week – until 1907, winning numerous prizes in band competitions.

In 1898, Dr Osborne Boyes presented a new set of brass instruments at a dinner held at the Star public house, replacing the original 15 instruments that had

been purchased new at a cost of £42.

Later that year the band won first prize in the Fulham Brass Band contest – the first of over 150 prizes won.

After becoming a founder member of the London and Home Counties Amateur Band Association – under the new name Barnet Town Band – the band won first prize at the association's annual contest at Crystal Palace in 1908.

The band played at the opening of the war memorial at Barnet parish church; welcomed its first female member in the 1940s; and celebrated its diamond jubilee with a concert at the Old Court House recreation ground in Wood Street, Barnet in August 1949.

The transformation to a wind band followed several difficult years in the 1980s when it had not been possible to stage viable performances. Under its director Denis Collings, the band welcomed wind players and changed from being a competition brass band to a community wind band.

Sue Dunn said the band's archivist is always keen to hear memories and stories about the band's past performances and history.



The whole band, 1907



The whole band, 1910



The whole band, 1925

Barnet Beyond Brexit - ask the experts yourself

Everything is up in the air at the moment over the UK's exiting of the European Union but life will go on whatever the outcome and so our forum on March 7 will look at key local issues



Theresa Villiers: on the panel

For our spring public forum, the Barnet Society has arranged for an expert panel to answer questions of local interest on key issues such as the future of education and training, prospects for local employment, plans for new housing and future safeguards for the Green Belt.

Join us for Barnet Beyond Brexit on Thursday 7 March at Christ Church, St Albans Road, Barnet, from 6:45-

9:00pm. Admission is free. Our line-up includes two head teachers, speakers with specialist knowledge of housing, planning, the environment and employment, together with the Chipping Barnet MP, Theresa Villiers.

Questions about local schooling and the future direction of education will be answered by Violet Walker, head teacher of Queen Elizabeth's Girls' School since 2015, Chris Fairbairn, who was appointed Principal of Totteridge Academy in 2016, and Bob Burstow, educationist, who last year instigated Barnet's Teenage Market'.

We hope representatives of local traders and businesses will join the discussion on youth employment and future job prospects.

Our two experts on housing, planning and the environment are Ross Houston, Barnet Council's Labour spokesperson on housing, and Richard Knox-Johnston, chair of the London Green Belt Council.

Mr Houston, has had considerable experience of housing management and is a Council member of Barnet Homes. Mr Knox-Johnston is a long-standing member of the Council for the Protection of Rural England.

It will be a timely opportunity to discuss Mayor of London's London Plan and Barnet's draft Local Plan, due out in February, which could significantly increase housing densities in our neighbourhood and will set out the Council's latest employment policies.

As MP for Chipping Barnet, Theresa Villiers will be asked for her response as the various issues are discussed – and her many interests include the work of the All-Party Parliamentary Group for London's Green Belt, of which she is treasurer.

We intend to allow ample time for our sessions on education, training and employment, and housing and the environment, while ensuring an opportunity for debate and for our speakers to round up our discussion.

We would welcome as many questions in advance, via email please to chair@barnetsociety.org.uk or by post to Robin Bishop, Chair of the Barnet Society, 46 Fitzjohn Avenue, Barnet, Herts EN5 2HW

Light refreshments will be available from 6.30pm.

We will carry a full report of the proceedings on the Barnet Society's website www.barnetsociety.org.uk where further comments can be made.

Do you know someone who deserves community award?

There are many people over the years who have been selfless in helping to make High Barnet a better area in which to live. Welfare groups, social care organisations, health charities, churches, environment and sports outfits have all made major contributions to the fabric of Barnet. Mostly, this work is entirely voluntary and done without any desire for recompense or preferment. Now, the Barnet Society has decided it's high time that these unsung heroes gain some recognition.

With that in mind, we are establishing The Barnet Society Community Awards, to recognise these contributions. Recipients will be given a certificate to be presented at our Annual General Meeting in June, which will include a citation summarising their achievements.

If you know anybody whom you feel might fulfill the criteria for an award, please send a nomination to: **Robin Bishop**, Chair of the Barnet Society, 46 Fitzjohn Avenue, Barnet, Herts EN5 2HW chair@barnetsociety.org.uk

Membership News - January 2019

Welcome to all our new members who've recently joined. It was a bumper year in 2018 with just over 80 new members joining, although, to put a damper on things, we are still regrettably losing more members than we should be. With the advent of PayPal we are tending to get the "One Year Wonder" syndrome as I call it. Those who join up using PayPal and then lapse. Not everyone does, but we're trying to encourage not only PayPal joiners, but everyone who still uses cheques to convert to Standing Order. Your renewal would be automatic and seamless. To give you an idea of what we're trying to achieve in terms of savings for the Society, currently, out of the 400 or so memberships we hold, 148 pay by Standing Order not requiring renewal reminders. The rest, 157 by cheque, 80 by PayPal and 13 by cash making the other 250, all do require reminders. If all converted to Standing Orders we would save at least £500 per year. **John Hay**
Email: membership@barnetsociety.org.uk

New Treasurer Needed

Mary Pettinger is stepping down as Treasurer in April 19 so if you would be interested in becoming Treasurer – or know another member who might – please contact the Chair at robin.bishop@gmx.co.uk Familiarity with book-keeping and Excel is essential.

