
EVTRA Newsletter

An occasional publication of the Elm Village Tenants and Residents Association



Covering 11–111 Barker Drive, Bergholt Mews, Blakeney Close, Rossendale Way and 44 St Pancras Way

March 2007

If you're thinking of getting ill — don't!

No, this is not an article about the Health Service, but about our local pharmacy. The owners of the Biotech Pharmacy in Camden Road are Ugandan Asians who have been here since the last King of Scotland, Idi Amin, decided to purify his country by driving them out (haven't we heard that somewhere before?). Many residents have shopped there, taken prescriptions there and received advice from them over the years, but we had not realised that they have also often gone out to help and advise local

people who could not come to them. This must be much appreciated by all, especially by some of our Asian residents.

But this valuable aspect of our community may become yet another victim of a climate in which the big boys close down or eat up the little fish. (Do you remember Corrigan the butcher, and the bakeries and fishmongers on Camden High Street, and of course our Post Office, which leaves you with the "more efficient" option of walking to the High Street and waiting a mini-

mum of 10 minutes in a queue?)

The culprits in this case are the ABC Pharmacy. They tried to buy Biotech out, and will next try to undercut them by opening a store opposite and staying open for 100 hours a week. Do we really need two pharmacies so close together? If you want to help Roger Robinson and a group of Councillors from all parties to resist one more shameful episode in which ordinary people are being ignored, please contact Roger (roger.robinson@camden.gov.uk; tel. 07739 364 147).

Warning — children on the roof!

Cllr Roger Robinson and EVTRA members, represented by barrister Zoe Leventhal, attended a meeting of the Development Control Committee on March 1st to oppose the current plans for the next stage of development of St Pancras Way (nos. 22–24). It became clear that the planners had no real intention of changing course. The development is going ahead. The Committee therefore feels that further opposition is fruitless. What is needed now is damage limitation.

At least one possible prob-

lem can already be foreseen. There is to be a children's playground on top of one of the two blocks, and as one can often hear the children at the St Michael's/Our Lady schools it is likely there will be a noise problem.

Cllr Robinson is very willing to support us and to make protests on our behalf. But to get things done he will need evidence. He suggests that residents who experience any form of nuisance should keep a diary or log with dates and times. If you are inclined to do this, we suggest two possible approaches: (1) Use pen and

paper and keep a file until there is a call for supporting evidence, or (2) jot down your complaint (what happened, date and time) and send it to the Secretary as an e-mail (evtrasec@aol.com). He will keep a file which can then be called on as needed. Please make it clear in the e-mail whether you are willing for your name to be used and whether you are willing to be approached to expand or reinforce your complaint. As ever, a request for anonymity will be scrupulously observed. Either way, the information will be useful.

Elm Village: the next big car park in Camden — and it's free!

Well, not yet, at any rate. But we know that in the next block to be built on St Pancras Way there are to be no parking spaces (in Star Wharf, now nearing completion, there will be some parking, but only 26 spaces for 64 flats). We feel that it is unlikely that people who are in a position to buy a flat will readily accept a sort of ban on cars. It is therefore likely that car owners will realise that

there is no restriction on parking in the Village in the evenings and at weekends.

The Committee feels that the only solution will be to ask the Council to extend the restrictions to these periods. However, it is likely that some residents will resist this because of inconvenience to visitors. We therefore suggest to residents that you should begin to talk to friends and neigh-

bours about the pros and cons of extending the restrictions. Just as when the present parking zone was created, there would be full consultation before any change and you would have every right to oppose proposals if you wished. We will be informing residents in due course about how the process of consultation works.

And the Special of the Day is . . . ?

Many residents will by now be aware of the fact that they have the pleasure — or irritation — of strong food smells coming from St Pancras Way. Roger Robinson looked into this for us and the Secretary has now received a reply from the Council. Residents may be surprised by its content: "The nuisance provisions of the Environmental Protection Act 1990 Section 79 specifically excludes odours from domestic premises as an issue for which the Council can take nuisance action. I regret therefore that we have no powers to deal with this type of problem."

However, we believe that the source is commercial, not domestic, and so are asking Roger to check on this. He advises that at some point resi-

Grinding noises

dents will be asked to keep a log if they wish to protest, so please do this, though the mills of the Council grind exceedingly slowly. We will keep monitoring the matter.

A slow grind (part 2)

The promised alleyway light between Rossendale Way and Bergholt Mews is also suffering from delays. Again the indefatigable Roger is on the case. But at least the light has been approved!

A long slow grind (part 3)

Some residents have noticed that some of our streets are not getting swept. Residents who have talked to the chap who sweeps Barker Drive say that he is a very nice person and happy to help. But he thinks that the Garden Centre is

responsible, at least for some of the year. This is not correct and is another service you don't get for your rocketing Service Charge. Committee member Sandra Dystant, whose very name sends Council employees scurrying to their nuclear bunker, has gone into the matter and — wait for it — was told that we are not on their list of streets. Being a lady, she retained her composure (with difficulty) and pointed out that the streets have been adopted for about 15 years, and that they certainly know where to send Council Tax demands and parking penalties. At the last Committee meeting Cllr Robinson said he would press the appropriate people. (We wonder how this man can remain so optimistic and energetic!)

Warning: return of drug dealers predicted

Readers will know that there have been great improvements in this area. We have been far less troubled recently by these antisocial activities. However,

there is growing evidence that the dealers are returning and are even more likely to do so when the new Camden Town Dispersal Zone is imposed. Cllr

Roger Robinson is trying to get an extension of the Zone to our area. Meanwhile there are initiatives by the Safer Neighbourhood Panel

and the police to bear down on the problem. Residents can help by immediately reporting suspicious cars etc. to Roger Robinson, roger.robinson@camden.gov.uk, tel. 07739 364 147, or contact the police on 020 8733 6262.

Are you satisfied with local bus services?

A PlusBus service (from Elm Village to Camden Town via Camley Street and Crowndale Road) was originally agreed upon. The aim was to help disabled and elderly residents and people with heavy shopping or young children (or both). But Transport for London have now cancelled the project, and have in fact cancelled all such projects in London. If you are not happy with this you should send a protest directly to Roger Robinson (roger.robinson@camden.gov.uk). At the last Committee meeting it was suggested that many people would appreciate a re-routing of the 274 bus going towards Camden town so that it turns into Georgiana Street, with a stop at the end of Barker Drive. If you think this is a good idea, please e-mail Roger Robinson.

Empty your wallets — just a few days to the big hike!

Some residents have been in contact expressing their horror and indignation at the large increase in service charges which takes effect in April. After taking advice the Committee decided that the cheapest and most effective way to protest was for one member of the Committee to make an individual appeal to the relevant tribunal service. Clearly, if her appeal is successful it will set a precedent and all residents will profit from the decision. As you know, PFP have decided to hold a meeting (on the same day as the preliminary mediation hearing at the Residential Property Tribunal Service) to explain/discuss (= tell us) about what is to happen. You should all have been notified about this meeting, but in case you haven't it will be at the Irish Centre at 6.30 on Tuesday, March 27th.

USEFUL CONTACTS

Police

Urgent calls: 999
 Drug dealing etc.: 020 8733 6262
 Reporting needles: Drug Action Response Team (DART): 0800 032 3278 (do not move the needle yourself)
 Reporting dealing etc.: Safer Neighbours Programme 020 8721 2810
 Camden Town and Kentish Town: 020 7404 1212
 Camden Town street wardens 020 7974 5195
 Street Services Team (help for people on the street) 020 7833 7970
 Community safety team 020 7974 2915
 Borough Control Room (for reporting less urgent crime) 020 7404 1212

Crimestoppers (for anonymous information): freephone 0800 555 111; www.crimestoppers-uk.org
Places for People
 0800 432 0002 or 0800 432 0003;
 Mehz Omar (Neighbourhood Officer): 020 7520 7419; mehz.omar@placesforpeople.co.uk
Camden Council
Recycling: 020 7974 6914 (for free collection of garden waste); recycling@camden.gov.uk; www.camden.gov.uk/recycling
Guide for older people (Getting on in Camden): 020 7974 4523; www.camden.gov.uk
Healthy living activities and events: 0800 068 2949, or www.wellandwise.org.uk
Disability information directory: 020 7974 2230
Community Safety Team: 7974 2915

Street problems

Litterline (rubbish collection, graffiti, dirty streets, abandoned cars): 020 7974 6914 or 6915; street.environment@camden.gov.uk
 Blocked kerbside gullies and drains: 020 7974 2005
 Dog fouling: 020 7974 6914
 Hole in road/uneven pavement: 020 7974 2015
 Street lighting: 020 7974 2006
 Street sweeping: 020 7974 6915
 Parking permits: 020 7974 4646
 Noise (9.0 a.m. to 4 p.m.): 020 7974 2090; env.health@camden.gov.uk
 Weekend noise service (Friday and Saturday, 10 p.m. to 4 a.m.): 020 7278 4444
General enquiries (Town Hall): 020 7278 4444
Councillor: Roger Robinson, roger.robinson@camden.gov.uk