
EVTRA Newsletter

An occasional publication of the Elm Village Tenants and Residents Association



Covering 11-111 Barker Drive, Bergholt Mews, Blakeney Close, Rosendale Way and 44 St Pancras Way

August 2007

JOB VACANCIES

EVTRA would like to hear from qualified and experienced Pied Pipers, for a short-term appointment with the aim of removing the rats and mice which have increasingly been observed and heard by Elm Village residents.

It has been suggested that the rats come through the water supply system or from the destruction of habitats by building works. The problem seems to be most serious where there are cavity walls (which is just about everywhere in Elm Village).

Although some residents

have taken action by using poison and mouse traps, or keeping or borrowing a cat, others believe (unwisely) that it is the duty of PFP and/or the Council to take action.

Here is the reply from PFP:

Rodents are a general problem across London exacerbated by the age and condition of the Victorian sewage system. Building works also do tend to create problems in an area because of the extent of groundworks taking place. Not clear what you mean about cavity walls

being a problem. All properties on Elm Village have cavity walls. Generally mice infestation are more common in older properties because these are more potential ways in e.g. Victorian cellars, air bricks, old coal chutes etc although it is very difficult to make a house mouse proof as they can squeeze through holes as narrow as a pencil.

Councillor Roger Robinson thought that dealing with such pests was done free by the Council.

Woodman, spare that tree!

Both at the AGM and on other occasions residents have raised various issues about trees, especially as some have recently been felled. The position is as follows.

(1) The opposition to tree-felling by some residents a little while ago led to the trees in Elm Village being given Tree Preservation Orders (TPOs). As a consequence trees can only be felled

or removed with the approval of the Tree Officer. But this is the final decision. Thus though EVTRA or PFP can make suggestions and objections, it is the Tree Officer who decides. But this does that any recent tree pruning or felling has only been done after consultation.

(2) Some residents have expressed concern about the effect on light of trees near

their homes. If you have this type of problem, you should first consult Mike Jackson, who in turn would contact the Council (for permission) and PFP (for the money) about any proposed major works.

There has been a survey of the trees with a detailed report on them. Mike Jackson has this report and interested residents should contact him.

It may have been raining but someone still needs water . . .

Mike Jackson has drawn attention to the plants on Barker Drive and particularly those in the large concrete boxes. He has been watering these and Thames Water have been charging £250 a year. But recently they have proposed

to raise this to £1000. He has negotiated a deal at the lower price, but the amount allowed is not going to be sufficient, especially in dry conditions. Also the Thames Water bureaucracy are imposing conditions which will

seriously limit flexibility. In such circumstances the plants will either die or have to be removed.

Instead, Elm Villagers might choose to follow the example set recently by a group of residents in Albert Street, who

'adopted' the trees and public floral areas in their road. Each resident or group of residents agreed to take on the tree outside their house. They used waste water (e.g. washing-up water) etc. for watering. In this way the community also felt that they had some control over their environment and the plants are thriving. If the idea appeals to you, contact the Secretary, or Mike Jackson (approach him through the Garden Centre).

Security gates: a warning

Some residents have been worried by the loss of security because the gates to the space next to the canal behind Rossendale Way and to the Triangle area are faulty. We have raised the matter with Mehz Omar of PFP at the last walk-about and she agreed to act as a matter of urgency. Knowing that the term 'urgency' doesn't mean the same in PFP talk as it does to most people, a kind benefactor has put a padlock on the Triangle gate. Residents affected by the other gate may well choose to do the same.

What's that lorry outside my front door?

Residents of Barker Drive have become increasingly annoyed by the arrival of large lorries which are bound for Camley Street warehouses or the Channel Tunnel works and then find themselves unable to exit. So they have to reverse with great inconvenience to all other users. At the AGM a resident suggested that (wait for it) that a sign was needed to alert lorry drivers **before** they entered Barker Drive. (There is a small one — too late — when the lorry has already got into Barker Drive.) We have asked Cllr Robinson to put this brilliantly novel idea to the Transport Department!

More water: leaking pipes

At the AGM on 12 July residents commented (again) on the problem of leaking overflow pipes in Barker Drive. These are also disfiguring the brickwork. EVTRA have approached PFP who have replied as follows:

We can ask home owners to fix these under the terms of their lease but it is not always that easy to identify which property it is coming from and people do not necessarily

know it is occurring themselves. I have asked Mehz to investigate. We would fix any rented units.

Another resident, undaunted by the continuous rain, remembered that there is a looming water crisis caused by global warming. She drew attention to the lack of downpipes from guttering in many parts of the estate. This means that the water cannot be collected in butts and used for watering

gardens, trees and planters. In view of current concerns about saving water, she argued that PFP could and should help to rectify this situation as part of their environmental policy and that the time of redecoration might be a good time to do so. PFP have said they will consider the practicalities and, if possible, any extra costings relating to the suggestion. They will come back to us.

REDECORATION NEWS

Jogging snail overtakes PFP officials preparing for this once-in-a-lifetime event

We still have no dates for this work, but the specifications are available by e-mailing the Secretary. PFP have also invited

residents to inspect the tenders. However, to see these you have to go to their Grays Inn Road offices because

"There is some potentially commercially sensitive information contained in the

detailed tenders so we would not want to put copies into public circulation but they are available for inspection by homeowners in compliance with the statutory requirement."

The AGM

As you will remember, the AGM was held at the Irish Centre on 12 July, attended by Committee members and some 14 other residents. You can read the minutes etc. on the web site: www.evtra.org.uk/AGMminutes2007.pdf and www.evtra.org.uk/AGMChairRep2007.pdf.

More warmth, more noise?

Now that we have sunshine again, at least some of the time, please remember the existence of your neighbours. If you're having a party or playing music loudly with the windows open, remember that everyone next door will be forced to join in. So please keep the noise down, especially late at night, and ask guests to be considerate too.

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;
 Mehzi Omar (Neighbourhood Officer): 020 7520 7419; mehzi.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: 020 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