barnetfirst

issue 44 January/February 2011



Barnet Pledgebank See page 10



2 barnetfirst issue 44 January/February 2011

Contents

Leader's column	2
News in brief	3
Commenting on Barnet's Budget	6
We are counting on you	7
My Barnet	8
A website to help people get things done	10
First wave of residents	
receive keys to new homes	12
Contact your councillors	14
Holocaust Memorial Day 2011	15
What's on in Barnet	15
Working hours	16

Contacting your council

Corporate Customer Services

tel: 020 8359 2000

email: first.contact@barnet.gov.uk

Contact us and we will identify the correct service or person you are looking for

Street-based services

tel: 020 8359 4600

Covering refuse collection, holes in the road, abandoned vehicles and graffiti

Parking enquiries

tel: 020 8359 7446 email: parking@barnet.gov.uk

Planning and licensing advice tel: 020 8359 3000

Social Care Direct

tel: 020 8359 5000

Out of hours emergencies tel: 020 8359 2000

Barnet First is published by Barnet Council's Communications Team. Please contact Sue Cocker on 020 8359 7039

or email barnet.first@barnet.gov.uk

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Leader's column



very person in the borough has a different relationship with the council. At one end of the scale are people who need daily support to live an active life, while at the other end are people who have only occasional contact, through street cleaning and waste removal.

In our last issue we asked you to contribute to the Budget Ideas website for your ideas on how we cope with a smaller budget. Not on the council's budget as a whole, but based on your experience of individual services, from parks to care of older people. Many of you responded, so thank you.

In this issue we are launching a new website, Barnet Pledgebank.

Details are on page 10. This is intended to let residents make a pledge of community activity and to gather the support needed to carry it out.

In many ways the principle behind the website is the same as the Budget Ideas website. That residents working together, sometimes with the council, sometimes without, can achieve a great deal more than a council working in isolation.

We want to encourage community activity, with much of this activity simply stimulated by encouraging people to talk to each other. It may not need the council to do any more than introduce residents to each other.

Barnet's residents have a long history of being active citizens – volunteering rates are much higher than the London average. I hope we can help you to help your fellow residents.

Lynne Hillan

barnetfirst issue 44 January/February 2011 3



Work to begin on Henlys Corner improvement scheme

Advance works are to begin soon in readiness for the major junction improvement scheme at Henlys Corner on the A406 North Circular Road.

With approximately 94,000 vehicles passing through it daily, the current layout of the junction poses considerable difficulties for all road users. Crossing the road can be very difficult for pedestrians, particularly those with mobility impairments.

Transport for London's (TfL's) improvement scheme is designed to resolve these issues, providing crossing facilities for pedestrians and offering benefits to motorists through smoother flowing traffic and improved journey times.

The advanced works will involve landscape alterations, temporary signal installation and utility diversions in preparation for the main construction work. Subject to obtaining the usual consents, the main construction work is due to

start in Spring 2011 and will take up to a year to complete.

For more information, contact TfL on 0800 022 3722 or visit tfl.gov.uk/henlyscorner

Freedom for allotments



Barnet allotment holders are set to have a greater say about the way their plots are run.

A proposed new management scheme will allow allotment societies to take greater responsibility for their sites including decision making on funding, maintenance and improvement works.

Plot holders are encouraged to put themselves forward for the scheme, which is part of the council's 'Big Society' model.

The Brook Farm Allotment Society in Whetstone is set to become one of the first groups to adopt the idea, before it is rolled out across the borough.

Tom Thorne, Society Secretary, added: "It's a very exciting scheme and I look forward to it benefiting our members, as well as future allotmenteers."

To find out more about allotments in the borough, visit www.barnet.gov.uk/allotments

Fairway celebrations



A new chapter in the life of a much-loved children's centre has been marked by a celebration of its users past and present.

Over 350 guests gathered at the Fairway Children's Centre to celebrate 50 years of providing a valuable resource to children and young families as well as their move into a new building in early 2011.

The new site will see the coming together of Northway Special School, Fairway Primary School and the Fairway Children's Centre under one roof, providing a modern resource for the whole community.

"We felt it was important to mark the end of this chapter and to acknowledge that for some children (now adults) this was their home and for others it holds many cherished memories", said centre manager Sue Sharp. 4 barnetfirst issue 44 January/February 2011

Cashless parking making life easier for motorists



Pay-by-phone parking continues to prove a hit with more than 30,000 motorists in Barnet now registered with the scheme.

Rolled out across the borough in July, cashless parking allows motorists with an account to phone or send a text message detailing their proposed length of stay and location number instead of having to use cash to pay to park.

This means that, even if there is a problem with an on-street machine, there is an alternative option for motorists.

Each coin-operated machine displays instructions on how to register and use the cashless option.

An automated message is sent to your mobile phone confirming

payment and advises when the session is due to expire, offering the opportunity to 'top up'.

Councillor Brian Coleman, Cabinet Member for Environment, said: "It provides a safer, easier and much more flexible method of payment for Barnet's motorists.

"People are more likely to have a mobile phone and credit or debit card on them than the correct change for a parking meter."

Civil Enforcement Officers are equipped with high-tech handheld devices to monitor which cars have purchased cashless parking and when their time will run out.

A Penalty Charge Notice (PCN) will be issued if a cashless parking or pay and display option has not been used. For more information about cashless parking, visit www.barnet.gov.uk/cashless-parking-pay-by-phone

Council's performance figures published online

Barnet has published its performance results which assess how well the council is performing against its targets, in line with its commitment to transparency of information.

Notable achievements include 82 percent of Barnet's schools now rated as good or outstanding compared with a national average of 53 percent. Challenges include the reduction in recycling rates across the borough which has resulted in increased amounts of household waste being sent to landfill, and coping with the in-year demand for extra primary school places.

For more information on performance results, visit www.barnet.gov.uk/cp-annual-performance-monitors

Short film competition launched



Budding film-makers are being invited to show off their creativity and enter the 2011 "Film London in 90 seconds".

Funded by Film London, this short film competition is being run across Barnet as well as 10 other boroughs. There are two categories, under-20 years and over-20. The winner in each category in Barnet will win a £250 cash prize.

The best film from each borough will be shown to a film industry panel and an overall winner chosen and screened at the annual Film London Best of Borough Awards at BAFTA.

barnetfirst issue 44 January/February 2011 5

This year's theme is Capital Tales and entries can be filmed using any medium.

Student Elisahama Udorok, who was voted winner last year for Barnet and London overall, said: "I always thought I'd need a top of the range camera to make a video that would be respected beyond my closest friends and family. Winning this award proved me wrong."

For more information on the competition, visit www.barnet.gov.uk/film-competition

Rate our adult services



Let us know your experiences of the adult care services you receive.

Every year, the Department of Health asks councils to carry out a survey of people who use adult social care services. The survey will be sent to a sample of around 1,200 people who receive a social care service or funding from the council.

The results will be sent back to the Department of Health and Barnet Council to improve future services. For any questions about the survey, contact Dawn Rowe on 020 8359 4579 or email dawn.rowe@barnet.gov.uk

High praise for council services

Barnet Council's Children's and Adult Services have received glowing endorsements during recent inspections.

The unannounced inspection by Ofsted – the children and schools watchdog – looked at key areas in the Children's Service such as day-to-day work of social workers, experience of staff and procedures used when tackling caseloads.

The assessment saw the service improving its rating of 'performing well' last year to 'excellent', putting Barnet among the best performing councils in the country.

The report came after Adult Social Services received an 'excellent' rating in a recent assessment carried out by government regulator the Care Quality Commission.

The rating, based on a 12-month assessment, gauges how well social services departments are performing in local authorities across England.

The Commission noted the service had a 'clear vision' and worked effectively with partners such as NHS Barnet.

UK Youth Parliament

Young people in Barnet will soon have a national voice as elections open for the borough's first ever representatives to the UK Youth Parliament (UKYP).



Barnet's 11 – 18-year-olds will soon be able to vote for two Members of Youth Parliament (MYPs) who will represent them at national events, and two Deputy MYPs.

The UKYP was established in 2000 and is run by young people for young people, giving them the opportunity to share their opinions on a range of issues.

To find out more about the candidates, visit www.barnetukyp.co.uk and to vote online (from 7 – 18 February 2011) visit www.mi-vote.co.uk

The successful candidates will be announced on 21 February 2011 during a results evening to be held at North London Business Park.

For more information call 020 8359 6086, or email ukyp@barnet.gov.uk



Commenting on Barnet's Budget

esidents are now being invited to have their say on the fine detail of the council's budget proposals for the next three years.

Consultation has begun on the £43.1million net savings the council has to make over the next three years to deal with a reduction in its overall income from central government. The proposals include no rise in council tax in 2011/12.

The council is also considering the hundreds of suggestions and comments on its Budget Ideas website, launched in September 2010.

The website invited suggestions from residents on specific areas that the council could be better at; could stop; or for which it could charge a small fee. The suggestions covered a range of services. The website had more than 5,000 visits, generated 200 ideas, 350 comments and 1,600 votes.

Some of the feedback has been incorporated into the council's budget plans, including:

Stop cutting the grass in parks as often

We are now trying a new, slower-growing grass which is more resistant to adverse weather conditions. This could then lead to a reduced need to cut the grass.

Give residents a bag of grit to use in their street when we have heavy snow

A pilot programme for community involvement during snow is in place for 2010/11. This worked well during the recent heavy snow and we hope to roll it out across the borough for 2011/12.

Setting up a Direct Debit to pay for Council Tax online

The council is currently redesigning and relaunching its website to allow customers to carry out many more transactions online. A new website will be available in the Spring.

Councillor Daniel Thomas, Cabinet Member for Resources and Performance, said: "The strength of the Budget Ideas website is that people are able to comment on their services as they use them, giving us the benefit of their experience rather than being expected to have a view on the totality of how the council spends its £800million per year."

For more information visit www.barnet.gov.uk/service-consultation



The response to
the census helps
to make sure that
Barnet's services
get the right level of
government funding

We are **counting** on you

ith just two months to go until the next census drops onto doormats across the borough, residents are asked to complete and return the survey in order to make sure Barnet receives its fair share of government funding.

The response to the census helps to make sure that Barnet services get the right level of government funding. This helps to fund schools, roads, the police, health and fire services among others.

Conducted once every ten years by the Office of National Statistics (ONS), the census allows us to find out how people's lives and needs have changed, so that government and local authorities can plan, fund and deliver the services you need. The next Census Day is on 27 March 2011.

During March, you will be posted a questionnaire to complete about yourself and the people who share your household with you. You will also be able to complete the same questionnaire online from 4 March 2011 at www.census.gov.uk

Everything you tell the census will be kept private. It is used to gather general information about groups and places and to plan the services they need. Your individual information won't be shared with any other government department or organisation.

The census needs everyone to take part in helping tomorrow take shape – and this will be your chance to make a difference.

For more information visit www.barnet.gov.uk/census2011

Barnet Civic Awards 2011 – nominations sought

Barnet Council is now inviting nominations for the 2011 Civic Awards. The deadline for the nominations has been extended to 31 January 2011. So if you know of any individuals or groups who you think

deserve recognition for their outstanding achievements and contributions to the borough, visit www.barnet.gov.uk/civic-awards to download a nomination form.

8 barnetfirst issue 44 January/February 2011

My Barnet

ach morning when Siobhan Fairclough steps out of her front door in Edgware she sees a reminder of her happy childhood. For the house she lives in is directly opposite the home she grew up in and the green on which she used to play.

"I grew up on this estate and always found it incredibly safe," she recalls. "The green is enclosed by the road and you could always be seen from each others' houses. When this house came up for sale I wanted to buy it so my family could experience the same security and sense of community which I'd had."

As a Police Safer Schools Officer for Barnet Borough Police, these are two values which Siobhan, 48, clearly holds dear. Based at Barnet Police Station, Siobhan spends most of her days visiting secondary schools in the borough talking to pupils about issues such as personal safety, bullying, drugs and weapons.

"Children that age can be your toughest critics but I enjoy talking to an audience that isn't afraid to challenge," she says.

Working in the same area in which she lives can mean Siobhan frequently gets noticed wherever she goes, often to the embarrassment of her daughters Hannah, 17, Jennifer, 14 and Catherine, 11.

"Sometimes it can feel a bit like being a celebrity,"
Siobhan laughs. "I'll be in the supermarket buying fruit
when suddenly I'll hear 'oh look there's PC Siobhan!"

When she's not working, Siobhan also acts as a parent governor for Oak Lodge special school in Heath View, East Finchley, where her daughter Jennifer is a pupil. Jennifer is on the autism spectrum and has development delay and speech problems. Oak Lodge is one of the largest secondary special schools in London, with 164 pupils, 80 of whom have a diagnosis of autism/autistic spectrum condition.

"Jennifer absolutely loves school and when a parent governor post became vacant it seemed like the natural thing to apply for," says Siobhan.

This September, Oak Lodge School was rated as 'outstanding' in its Ofsted inspection, giving it the same top ranking as Barnet's three other special schools - Oakleigh, Mapledown and Northway.

"All the staff, pupils, governors and parents work as a team, to make sure the pupils reach their fullest potential and are able to become valued members of the community," says Siobhan.

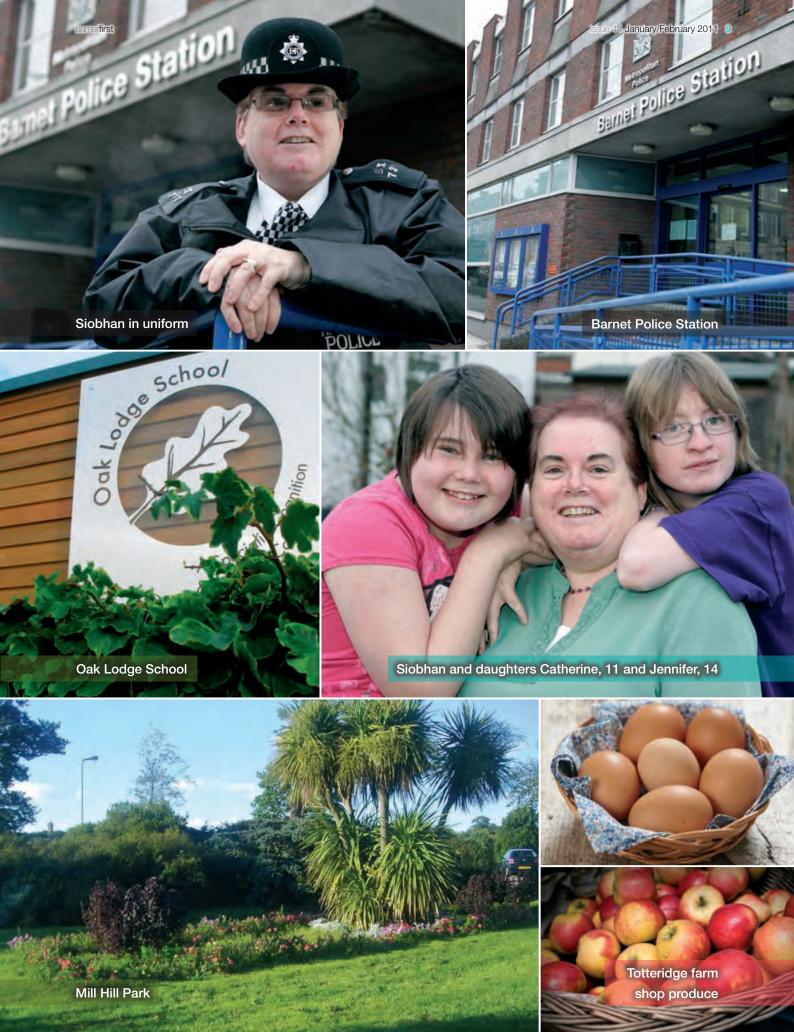
At weekends, Siobhan and her family can be found at the shops in Mill Hill Broadway, Mill Hill Park or buying eggs and jam from the farm shop on Totteridge Lane. "The farm shop is run by two ladies who know Jennifer really well. Even though we live so near to the main transport links, at the same time it often feels like being in one big village.

"I can see the fields nearby and love driving along Totteridge Lane. It's like being in the countryside even though I can get anywhere I want within minutes."



Tell us your story

If you would like to be featured in future issues of My Barnet, please email barnet.first@barnet.gov.uk with no more than 100 words describing your life in Barnet.



A website to help people get things done

Barnet Pledgebank aims to give people the help they need to mobilise their neighbours and get their project off the ground



n imaginative website designed to help residents passionate about doing their bit for the community has been launched by Barnet Council this month.

It could be used to mobilise people to clear snow and ice from pavements in their street, paint over graffiti or set up computer classes in their area.

The website is based on the simple principle that the person making the online pledge will work to make it happen 'but only if' a number of other people commit too.

It is hoped the website will help the council create a new relationship with citizens as part of its ongoing One Barnet Programme.

Once the pledge has been made, it is easy to keep track of how many people are still needed by simply visiting the website.

And, as people offer to play their part, the person making the pledge is put in touch with those signing up via email.

Pledgebank has been developed in conjunction with mySociety, a not for profit organisation responsible for public involvement websites such as the 10 Downing Street petitions site and FixMyStreet which is already used by many Barnet residents.

Other clever features include a facility to automatically generate and then print off flyers to publicise the pledge and encourage others to get involved.

Woodside Park resident Catherine Loveday believes the website could have proved a useful tool during her involvement in two campaigns to see the names of servicemen killed during World War II added to memorials in East Barnet and New Barnet.

Work on the East Barnet memorial was unveiled last Summer after a successful fundraising drive.

In her quest to achieve the same in New Barnet, she has single-handedly researched the 136 names

to be added to the memorial, set about raising the thousands of pounds needed to pay for the stone plagues, inscriptions and cleaning of the monument and even managed to find a Finchley-based scaffolding firm willing to provide its services free of charge.

Mrs Loveday said: "I think it would have been really useful in getting people together to help out with the research especially - it sounds like an excellent idea.

"I think there is a desire among people to get involved and set up their own projects, especially in the present economic climate. Council finances are limited and I think, by and large, people realise that.



"It can be daunting trying to organise people - living in London isn't like being in a village where you know everybody so it can be very difficult. It's also something that could really bring people together and help them get to know their community.

"It's great that people should be encouraged to get involved and I'm sure people are prepared to do more for themselves."

Councillor Lynne Hillan, Leader of the Council, said: "We know that there's a real willingness among residents to get involved and organise these projects for the good of their community but it's not always easy.

"It's no secret that nowadays we don't always know our neighbours all that well but Barnet Pledgebank is a very neat way of giving people the helping hand they might need to get these projects off the ground.

"This website has huge potential. Whatever it is that people have in mind I'd urge them to take a look at the website and become some of the first in the borough to make a pledge of their own."



Community coaches scheme tested

An innovative scheme for families who currently receive support from a number of different public services is being tested this month.

'Community coaches' are drawn from voluntary groups and the wider community in Barnet. They would work with struggling families to find the best way to work with a range of public sector organisations to get the support they need, simplifying their route into services. They would also help individuals and families to identify their longer-term aims and work with them to develop a realistic action plan and work towards it.

Early feedback during the test period has so far been positive, with everything learnt being used to ensure that when the service is rolled out, it can effectively support families facing multiple issues across the borough.

Cephas Akuklu, part of the community coach prototype, is optimistic about the benefits the scheme will deliver for the disadvantaged families he will be working with. He said: "Many of the people I shared the idea with were sceptical. Now some of these people are asking me lots of questions and I feel honoured to be part of a process that is going to get families to explore more options and bring out their potential."

You can follow the progress of the community coaches on Twitter at twitter.com/ CommunityCoach



he first tenants to move into their new homes as part of the multi-million pound Grahame

Park regeneration project will set foot through their front doors later this month.

Paula Almeida and her family will be one of the first 25 households to move in to modern, bright and spacious new properties, under the project's first major rebuilding stage.

"We're desperate to get into our new house", Paula explains with a big smile across her face. "We've been waiting for this moment a long time, so I can't believe it's here. It will certainly provide a fresh start for us."

Paula, who works in White City, has lived on the estate for the past 11 years and has been actively involved with the regeneration project since its conception, eight years ago.

She currently shares a two-bedroom flat with her husband and their two children.

"It is, of course, nice to be the first family to move," Paula says, "but I'd still be very happy if I was the second, third or even the last." In total, the £700million rebuilding scheme will create 3,000 new homes comprising privately owned, shared ownership and affordable builds – all with either balconies or gardens and a large majority overlooking green space.

Residents were also given the opportunity to choose kitchen and bathroom fixtures and fittings for their new homes – with the option to pay extra if they wish to upgrade.

The regeneration of the Grahame Park
Estate forms a central part of the Colindale
Action Plan which aims to create a vibrant new community with major infrastructure improvements, better transport links and community health facilities.



The first phase also includes significant improvements to nearby open space and ponds.

Originally built in the 1970s, Grahame Park became Barnet's largest housing estate containing more than 1,777 homes.

For Paula, the area's regeneration means a lot more to her than just receiving a new home.

"I hope people will be a lot more positive about things – especially the younger people living here.

"Perhaps they'll think, OK, we have a nice new place, let's take more pride,

look after it and even get more involved in the local community."

The estate's regeneration will be implemented on a phase-by-phase basis, with the next stage comprising 39 homes for sale, due for completion by the end of 2012.

This will be followed by a detailed planning application being submitted to the council for the next major phase which will contain more than 400 homes, a replacement library, community centre and shops, all due to be finished by 2016.

"We didn't really think about Christmas this year", Paula concludes. "We've just been looking forward to the move!

"The new house is certainly the best present we could have ever received."







For more information on regeneration projects visit www.barnet.gov.uk/regeneration



Contact your councillors

Brunswick Park

Conservative

Cllr Lynne Hillan

leader@barnet.gov.uk

Cllr Lisa Rutter

cllr.l.rutter@barnet.gov.uk

Cllr Andreas Tambourides

cllr.a.tambourides@barnet.gov.uk

Burnt Oak

Labour

Cllr Alex Brodkin

cllr.a.brodkin@barnet.gov.uk

CIIr Claire Farrier

cllr.c.farrier@barnet.gov.uk

Cllr Charlie O-Macauley

cllr.c.omacauley@barnet.gov.uk

Childs Hill

Liberal Democrat

Cllr Jack Cohen

cllr.j.cohen@barnet.gov.uk

Cllr Monroe Palmer

cllr.m.palmer@barnet.gov.uk

Cllr Susette Palmer

cllr.s.palmer@barnet.gov.uk

Colindale

Labour

Cllr Geoffrey Johnson

cllr.g.johnson@barnet.gov.uk

Cllr Gillian Sargeant

cllr.g.sargeant@barnet.gov.uk

Cllr Zakia Zubairi

cllr.z.zubairi@barnet.gov.uk

Coppetts

Labour

Cllr Pauline Coakley Webb

cllr.p.coakleywebb@barnet.gov.uk

Cllr Barry Rawlings

cllr.b.rawlings@barnet.gov.uk

Conservatives

Cllr Kate Salinger

cllr.c.salinger@barnet.gov.uk

East Barnet

Conservative

Cllr Barry Evangeli

cllr.b.evangeli@barnet.gov.uk

Cllr Robert Rams

cllr.r.rams@barnet.gov.uk

Cllr Joanna Tambourides

cllr.j.tambourides@barnet.gov.uk

East Finchley

Labour

Cllr Alison Moore

cllr.a.moore@barnet.gov.uk

Cllr Andrew McNeil

cllr.a.mcneil@barnet.gov.uk

Cllr Colin Rogers

cllr.c.rogers@barnet.gov.uk

Edgware

Conservative

Cllr Helena Hart

cllr.h.hart@barnet.gov.uk

Cllr Joan Scannell

cllr.j.scannell@barnet.gov.uk

Cllr Darrell Yawitch

cllr.d.yawitch@barnet.gov.uk

Finchley Church End

Conservative

Cllr Eva Greenspan

cllr.e.greenspan@barnet.gov.uk

Cllr Graham Old

cllr.g.old@barnet.gov.uk

Cllr Daniel Thomas

cllr.d.thomas@barnet.gov.uk

Garden Suburb

Conservatives

Cllr Andrew Harper

cllr.a.harper@barnet.gov.uk

Cllr John Marshall

cllr.j.marshall@barnet.gov.uk

Cllr Daniel Gideon Seal cllr.d.seal@barnet.gov.uk

Golders Green

Conservative

Cllr Dean Cohen

cllr.d.cohen@barnet.gov.uk

Cllr Melvin Cohen

cllr.m.cohen@barnet.gov.uk

Cllr Reuben Thompstone

cllr.r.thompstone@barnet.gov.uk

Hale

Conservative

Cllr Thomas Davey

cllr.t.davey@barnet.gov.uk

Cllr Brian Gordon

cllr.b.gordon@barnet.gov.uk

Cllr Hugh Rayner

cllr.h.rayner@barnet.gov.uk

Hendon

Conservative

Cllr Maureen Braun

cllr.m.braun@barnet.gov.uk

Cllr Anthony Finn

cllr.a.finn@barnet.gov.uk

Cllr Mark Shooter

cllr.m.shooter@barnet.gov.uk

High Barnet

Conservative

Cllr David Longstaff

cllr.d.longstaff@barnet.gov.uk

Cllr Bridget Perry

cllr.b.perry@barnet.gov.uk

Cllr Wendy Prentice

cllr.w.prentice@barnet.gov.uk

Mill Hill

Conservative

Cllr John Hart

cllr.j.hart@barnet.gov.uk

Cllr Sury Khatri

cllr.s.khatri@barnet.gov.uk

Cllr Brian Schama

cllr.b.schama@barnet.gov.uk

Oakleigh

Conservative

Cllr Sachin Rajput

cllr.s.rajput@barnet.gov.uk

Cllr Brian Salinger

cllr.b.salinger@barnet.gov.uk

Cllr Stephen Sowerby cllr.s.sowerby@barnet.gov.uk

Totteridge

Conservatives

Cllr Brian Coleman

cllr.b.coleman@barnet.gov.uk

Cllr Alison Cornelius

cllr.a.cornelius@barnet.gov.uk

Cllr Richard Cornelius

cllr.r.cornelius@barnet.gov.uk

Underhill

Conservative

Cllr Andrew Strongolou

cllr.a.strongolou@barnet.gov.uk

Cllr Rowan Turner

cllr.r.turner@barnet.gov.uk **Labour**

Cllr Anita Campbell

cllr.a.campbell@barnet.gov.uk

West Finchley

Labour

Cllr Ross Houston

cllr.r.houston@barnet.gov.uk

Cllr Kath McGuirk

cllr.k.mcguirk@barnet.gov.uk

Cllr Jim Tierney

cllr.j.tierney@barnet.gov.uk

West Hendon

Labour Cllr Julie Johnson

cllr.j.johnson@barnet.gov.uk

Cllr Agnes Slocombe

cllr.a.slocombe@barnet.gov.uk

Cllr Ansuya Sodha cllr.a.sodha@barnet.gov.uk

Woodhouse

Labour

Cllr Geof Cooke

cllr.g.cooke@barnet.gov.uk

Cllr Anne Hutton

cllr.a.hutton@barnet.gov.uk

Cllr Alan Schneiderman cllr.a.schneiderman@barnet.gov.uk

For details of surgeries, call 020 8359 2000 or email first.contact@barnet.gov.uk

Holocaust HolocausT Memorial Day 2011

very year, the council marks Holocaust Memorial Day by inviting all residents to attend a special service to mourn those who lost their lives through genocide.

For almost a decade, Barnet's Mayor has led a civic procession at Hendon. Every year, a range of special guests have spoken about their experiences to audiences of around 800.

This year's theme is 'Untold Stories' and guests will be encouraged to remember the past, reflect on the present and react to create a better future.

In attendance will be The Worshipful the Mayor of the London Borough of Barnet, Councillor Anthony Finn, and The Leader of the Council, Councillor Lynne Hillan.

At this year's event, speakers include:

- Vivian Wineman, President of the Board of Deputies of British Jews; Chairman of The Jewish Leadership Council; Vice President of the European Jewish Congress and Vice Chair of the UK Inter Faith Network
- Marla Tribich, Reminiscence of Warsaw
- Chief Superintendent Neil Basu, Borough Police Commander of Barnet
- Steve Knight, Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Director of Corporate Services, Middlesex University

'The London Cantorial Singers' and 'Alyth Youth Singers' choir groups will perform.

The event is being held on Sunday 23 January 2011 at 1pm at the Ricketts Quadrangle, Middlesex University, The Burroughs, Hendon NW4 4BT

Everyone is welcome to attend.



For more information visit

www.barnet.gov.uk/holocaust or call 020 8359 2493

January February

Your Life Online

Date: 15 January, 2pm - 3pm, 25 January, 10.30am - 11.30am at Hendon Library, 31 January, 2pm – 3pm at Burnt Oak Library.

Learn about social networking for work and pleasure.

For more information, contact Hendon Library on 020 8359 2628.

Chinese New Year Celebrations. celebrating the Year of the Rabbit

Date: 31 January - 5 February 2011 For more details about these events contact Hendon Library on 020 8359 2628 or visit www.barnet.gov.uk/library-events

Jackson's Way: The Jacksathon

Date: 27 January, 7.30pm at the artsdepot, £12/£10 conc Part theatre, part comedy, this is a modern day parody of American motivational speakers and a satire on the world of self-help and corporate jargon.

Half-term workshop - Ribbon Dance

Date: 24 - 26 February, 2pm - 2.45pm and 4.30pm - 5.15pm, at the artsdepot, £6

Join in the fun with some swirly whirly ribbon dancing. Weave colourful patterns in the air in this exciting and energetic workshop. For ages five and over. For more information, call 020 8369 5454.

Mischief

Date: 24 – 26 February, 3pm daily, at the artsdepot £10/£36 family ticket admits four (either 1 adult and 3 children or 2 adults and 2 children).

An award-winning show bursting with energy and magical fun, Mischief is a spellbinding mix of dance, visual art, puppetry, live music and playful clowning. For more information, call 020 8369 5454.



What does a typical day involve for you?

The job entails dealing with all kinds of customer enquiries; it could be absolutely anything so I wouldn't say I have a typical day – no two days are ever the same.

What was your reaction when you found out you had won the award?

It was a total shock. I'm never normally stuck for words but I think it's fair to say that I was completely gobsmacked when I found out that I'd won. I have to say though it's lovely to have that recognition and it's nice for Barnet too. It's a real confidence boost!

What's the hardest part of your job?

I suppose the hardest part is dealing with irate customers, but I see it as a challenge. I don't find it stressful really.

What's the secret of good customer service?

I think the key first of all is to make sure you listen to the customer and treat them with the utmost respect. Enquiries might seem trivial but it's extremely important for the customer and you always have to bear that in mind. Having a bit of personality definitely helps too, no-one wants to call up an organisation and get somebody

on the other end of the line with a monotone voice. In terms of humour, you've got to know when to use it and when not to but nine times out of ten people will respond well and it can really help.

How rewarding do you find the job?

I love it from beginning to end. It's such a nice feeling being able to take a call, turning it around and helping someone out. It's an important role in the sense that it's the first point of contact for many people and it's you that forms their first impression of the council.

For more information email first.contact@barnet.gov.uk