

barnetfirst

issue 43 October/November 2010



Budget special
Give us your bright ideas
ideas.barnet.gov.uk

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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



Over the coming three years we are likely to stop running some services that we want to run. Services that we have gradually built up by finding small pots of money here and there, services that day to day, make life better for many of our residents.

But the simple fact is that next year we will have less money to spend than we do this year. The year after that we expect to have still less. And less again the year after that.

Over the next three years we expect to make savings of around 20 percent in our budgets. The alternative would be a massive rise in council tax. Any of you who have lost your jobs over the last year or so, or have run a business over the past few years, will know how it is necessary to take pretty radical action when income drops like this.

As a council our priority is 'Safeguarding' – supporting those children and adults who most need our help. With other services much of the challenge will be how we do less, or how we do things differently.

We have launched an ideas website ideas.barnet.gov.uk asking you for any suggestions you have about how we can save money, provide a service in a simpler way, or potentially provide a better service by charging a small fee.

As importantly, we are keen that you rate the suggestions by other residents so we can develop a picture of what you want.

Over the coming months there will be a series of consultations across our services looking at how we can provide good services in difficult times.

I hope you will give us your views.

Lynne Hillan

News in brief

Young gardener inspires classmates



A 16 year old schoolboy who inspired fellow pupils to take up gardening has been named 'Young Gardener of the Year' in this year's Barnet in Bloom competition.

Zak Akers, a student at the London Academy Edgware, began gardening two years ago when he planned and sculptured the new school pond.

His teacher nominated him for being a positive role model to students from the lower years.

Zak said, "I'm so happy to have received this award. I just hope I can make a big difference with this communal garden as well as other gardens in the Barnet area."

To view a full list of Barnet in Bloom categories and winners visit: www.barnet.gov.uk/bib

A shared vision for Barnet's future

Barnet is set to publish two important documents setting out a shared vision of how the borough will look in 2026.

The 'Core Strategy' sets out plans to protect our open spaces, enhance suburbs and town centres and consolidate growth in regeneration areas. It reflects the 2,000 comments the council received from 334 respondents, including residents and community groups, on the draft published in 2009.

We now want to hear your final views before the strategy undergoes an independent examination next year.

The 'Development Management Policy' sets out the detailed local policies that will be used for day to day decision making by planning committees and officers.

More detailed information can be obtained on our website at www.barnet.gov.uk/planning-consultations. Paper copies are available at libraries in Barnet and the council planning reception at Barnet House. Consultation closes on 11 November 2010.

Brunswick Park Community Hub planning application withdrawn



Barnet Council and NHS Barnet have withdrawn a joint planning application for the new Brunswick Park Community Hub.

The application was withdrawn after the council was told by the Department for Education that funding for the scheme is no longer available.

The Community Hub would have included a new doctor's surgery, a public library and a children's centre. Later phases of the development potentially included public leisure facilities and a rebuilding of Brunswick Park Primary School.

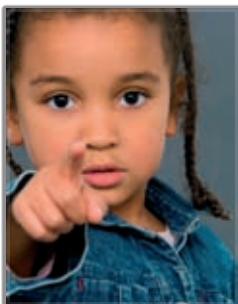
Leader of Barnet Council and local ward Councillor Lynne Hillan, said: "It's a real shame this project had to be cancelled at this stage. It hit all the right buttons for joined up public services."

Thinking about Adoption?

Barnet Adoption Service is co-hosting an open evening to mark the start of National Adoption Week. The evening, which takes place on Tuesday 2 November from 6pm at The Assembly Hall, Islington, is an essential event for anyone considering adoption in North London.

There will be presentations from The British Association of Adoption and Fostering (BAAF), adoptive parents and people who have personally experienced adoption. Have a one-on-one chat with adoption social workers from the London Boroughs of Barnet, Camden, Enfield, Haringey and Islington to find out more about the children we have waiting for a loving permanent home.

For more information or to book your place at this free event please text Adoption followed by your email address to 60777. Alternatively, email your name and address to nlac@adoption.org or visit www.adoptionnorthlondon.org



Building Schools for the Future projects cancelled

Six schools which were earmarked for funding under the Building Schools for the Future (BSF) investment programme have been told their projects have been cancelled.



Bishop Douglass Catholic, Copthall School, Oak Lodge, St Mary's C of E High, The Pavilion and The Ravenscroft School were included in the first wave of the BSF programme. None of them had reached final sign-off phase.

Councillor Andrew Harper, Deputy Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Education, Children and Families, said: "The ending of the BSF programme does not mean the work we have already done has been in vain. We will use this opportunity to revisit how we improve the condition of secondary schools in Barnet and the sufficiency of school places, building on the success of our £100 million, five year investment programme which has already delivered four new primary

schools and one secondary school on time and on budget."

Standards Committee Report available online

The annual report of the Standards Committee is available for residents to view online.

The Standards Committee has a membership of six elected Members and seven Independent Members. During the municipal year 2009/10 the Standards Committee considered 10 complaints concerning allegations of misconduct by Members.

At their meeting on 13 July 2010, the council considered the Annual Report of the Standards Committee.

To view the report, go to committeepapers.barnet.gov.uk/democracy

Details of how to make a complaint against a Member and information on local regulation is available on the council's website at: www.barnet.gov.uk/councillor-conduct-complaint

Nationality Checking Service goes from strength to strength



Barnet Council's Nationality Checking Service (NCS) is proving a hit with Londoners. Since its launch in 2006, the service, run in partnership with the Home Office and a number of local authorities, has been used by over 8,000 residents with a further 2,500 expected in 2010/11.

For a £40 fee, the council checks that each British Citizenship application form is completed correctly and is sent to the Home Office Border and Immigration Agency with official copies of the right supporting documents. The whole process is faster and allows applicants to keep hold of their passports and any other original documents which previously had to be sent to the Home Office.

Barnet Council's NCS has proved so popular it's been selected for a new pilot scheme in collaboration with Brent Council on Settlement Checking – based on marriage and civil partnerships. The pilot launches this October.

For more information on the Nationality Checking Service visit www.barnet.gov.uk/citizenship-ceremonies or call 020 8937 1010

Council publishes expenditure above £500 online

Barnet Council has opened its books and published details of spending above £500.

Details of payment to suppliers will be listed for the three months April to June 2010 inclusive and will next be published this month.

During the financial quarter April to June 2010 Barnet Council paid out £94 million to vendors on a variety of items, from adult care homes to utility bills.

Council Leader, Councillor Lynne Hillan, said: "Publishing our expenditure online is part of a current trend to make all public bodies increasingly accountable.

"I think it's only fair and reasonable that in the current climate residents are given the opportunity to scrutinise where their council tax is being spent making us accountable and ultimately, bring down costs."

www.barnet.gov.uk/barnet-expenditure

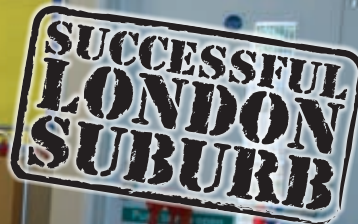
Regeneration projects given £3m boost

A number of key regeneration projects in Barnet have been given a boost following news the borough will receive £3.38 million in Growth Area Funding (GAF) – one of the largest allocations in London.

The money, distributed to local authorities from the department for Communities and Local Government (CLG), provides financial support to major infrastructure investment programmes.

Among the projects set to benefit are the Colindale regeneration area which will receive over £2 million to help improve transport links, while a further £1 million will boost the regeneration of the Granville Road Estate.

West Hendon's regeneration scheme will receive £0.38 million in addition to £1.6 million of Homes and Communities Agency (HCA) funding received by the council last month. GAF is distributed to local authorities over a three year period.



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The new classrooms are a hit

Boom in the classroom

Seven schools across the borough have each opened their doors to an extra classroom of pupils this autumn.

A growing population has led to unprecedented demand for primary school places across Barnet for the second year running.

The whole school community worked flat out over the summer to respond to the demand, creating an additional 210 reception school places. This is on top of the 60 extra permanent reception places which were created last year.

Accommodation for these extra places at Barnfield, Broadfields, Holly Park, Woodcroft, Tudor, Monkfrith and Dollis Infant schools ranged from small modifications within the school's existing buildings to the construction of modern, fully equipped temporary classrooms on the school sites.

Each of the schools will receive extra funding. But with population projections anticipating the demand for primary school places to rise even further, the children's service clearly has a huge task ahead. Over

the next five years, the children's service expects it needs to provide between 10 to 15 permanent expansions going through the school system, costing at least £36 million.

Councillor Andrew Harper, Deputy Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Education, Children and Families said: "Meeting our statutory duty in making sure all children have a school place will be a real financial challenge. However, we are determined to meet it whilst at the same time maintaining our priority of every school being a good school for every child.

"Preparations are already in place, but with an expected 20 percent cut in our core budgets this presents us with an enormous challenge.

"Schools offer us a vital link with the community, not only providing our children with an excellent education, but by identifying children in need.

"Looking ahead, schools will play an even more pivotal role in targeting support for the small number of families who need it most."



Would you like a book with that?

A Starbucks just off the A5 isn't the first place you'd expect to find your local library service.

But for Anne-Marie Sullivan and her ten month old daughter Teigan, the five minute walk from their home to the coffee shop is a regular one.

The pair attend Barnet Council's popular 'Bookstart' scheme, which has more than 3,000 active members and sees families come together each week to sing songs, catch up and borrow library books at venues across the borough.

"I try and come every week", Anne-Marie says. "I used to bring my son here and he liked it so I ended up bringing my daughter as well."

Bookstart sessions help improve a child's literacy by encouraging parents and carers to enjoy books with them from as early an age as possible.

Council library staff use handheld devices and laptops to issue books to parents, free of charge, just as if they were in a library building.

"I think bringing the library service here is a really good idea as sometimes I can't make it up to the local library which is in Hendon and is quite a distance for me.

"Here, it gives me the chance to have a coffee, talk to the other mums and borrow a couple of books in a nice setting."

Barnet Council are launching a four month consultation giving residents the opportunity to share their ideas on how they would like their libraries to be run in the future.



Teigan enjoys a book with mum Anne-Marie

Cabinet Member for Customer Access and Partnerships, Councillor Robert Rams, believes the library service needs to continue to develop.

"The library service is about so much more than buildings and we mustn't be frightened of change. We need to look at new and innovative ways of providing our service, to make sure it continues to provide value for money in these difficult times whilst meeting the needs and expectations of our customers.

"The borough's libraries have been successful in bucking the national trend of declining visits because we've not been afraid of innovations, such as e-books and online reference books.

"This is an important process and I hope to hear from not only active library users but also those residents which currently don't use the service."

To find out more about the Library service review visit: www.barnet.gov.uk/libraries

www

My Barnet



Walking around the Strawberry Vale estate in East Finchley with Reverend Helen Shannon can take a little time.

There are frequent stops along the way as she asks about the health of one resident's mother and chats to a mum putting stabilisers on her son's bike.

"Living here's a bit like being in a village," Helen smiles. "That's one of the things that drew me to the estate in the first place."

Born and raised in Barnet, Helen clearly relishes her role as neighbourhood pastor on the estate. Judging by people's reactions, the feeling is obviously mutual.

Sitting with her husband Mark, Helen recalls how she came to live here with her family two years ago.

"I've lived in housing estates before and wanted to move back. There's something about estates I really like; the strong sense of community which I think the rest of the borough can really learn from. During the heavy snow people knocked on their neighbours' doors to see if they needed any help.

"When this house came up for sale it seemed like an ideal opportunity. I used to be the children's worker at St Barnabas Church, and knew the estate well. We all moved in and haven't looked back."

Since arriving on the estate Helen and her team have set up separate multi-faith children's groups in the Green Man Community Centre, and a coffee and kids group for estate residents. Both are run in conjunction with St Barnabas and its charity partner Hope House.

In the summer there are BBQs in the family's back garden and get togethers at Christmas and New Year. Helen and Mark's open door policy often means answering a knock at the door – something they see

as part and parcel of both their new lives. Mark uses the family minibus to transport local children to school and in the evening Helen often helps organise events for the estate. On Sunday afternoons they run an informal service for the local neighbourhood called church@five.

As part of her role as a neighbourhood pastor, Helen oversees two trainees funded through the Connecting Communities programme who moved onto the estate to help strengthen and expand the work she started with young people who she felt had a 'poverty of aspiration'. Through this programme Helen wants to raise the young residents' expectations for themselves. The rest of her time is devoted to working with St Barnabas Church, Woodside Park.

"My role is to empower others, whether it's putting people in touch with others who can help them, building up skills and self-esteem, or providing a support network. It's about taking the church into the community rather than expecting people to come to us."

In her spare time Helen enjoys family outings to the Vue Cinema in North Finchley or Cherry Tree Woods in East Finchley, followed by breakfast in nearby Casa Pepe. "Barnet is where my roots are, I grew up here and can't see myself anywhere else. It's a real privilege to be able to serve the people of Barnet and especially our friends and neighbours in Strawberry Vale."

Tell us your story

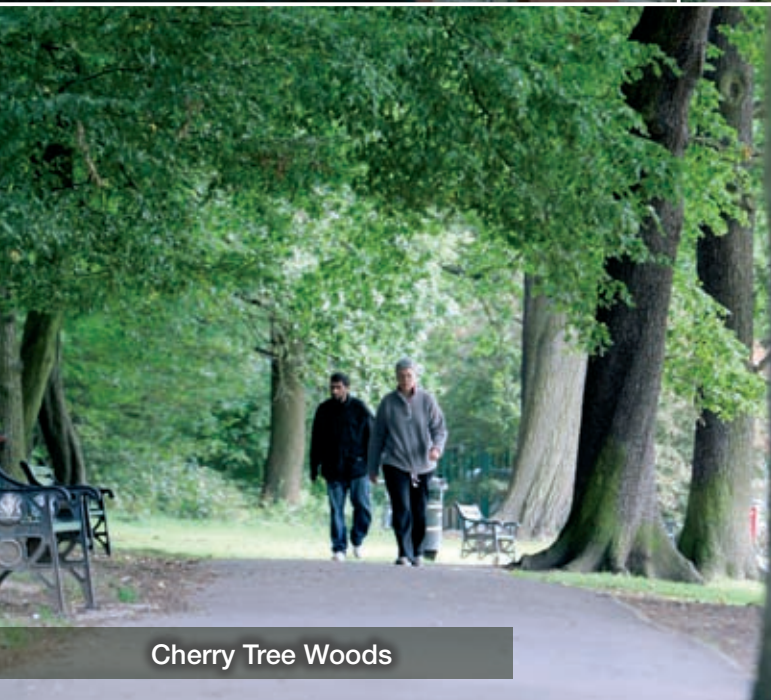
If you would like to be featured in future issues of My Barnet, please email barnet.first@barnet.gov.uk with no more than 100 words describing your life in Barnet.



Rev Helen Shannon



Strawberry Vale Estate



Cherry Tree Woods



Casa Pepe,
High Road, East Finchley



Saint Barnabas



Lean Times

"We all know there are going to be cuts and there are no hiding places – but if we can make services cheaper to run and simpler to use, this is the best way to be making savings."

That's the view of John McCafferty who's working on a 'lean programme' with the council's Adult Services Department. John's been one of the pioneers of the council's "Right to Control" scheme, giving people control over how the budget for their care support is spent. He's giving a service user's view on how adults with a disability are supported by the council.

"Right to Control gives me much more of a chance to be in charge of deciding what I need," says John. "It lets me spend the money as I see fit and which will help reduce time and wastage."

"For example when I needed a new shower chair it went back and forth with me ordering three chairs through the occupational therapists before I got the right fit. Frankly it's a lot simpler if I were to go out and get the right one, then sort out the bill rather than receiving one which is in stock that might not be suitable."

Whetstone born and bred, John became tetraplegic after an accident. "I broke my neck swimming in Greece in 2003. I'm now in a wheelchair with very weak upper body limb movement," he says.

"I spent two years stuck in a care home costing over £1,000 a week, simply because I couldn't get into accessible housing. I was basically left in the care home, with them getting the money and me feeling dumped. So a key issue for me is how residents can get help and support – particularly about access to work."

John's next challenge is a MA in photography at Middlesex and a new sporting project. "I'm very keen to make a project on the athletes competing in the 2012 Paralympic Games," he says.

On the back of his experience on Right to Control, John was asked to act as an advisor for simplifying council services in a 'lean programme', producing a

simpler service for residents and more economical processes for the council.

"I was phoned up by Adult Social Services who know me as a service user and for some volunteer work that I do," recalls John, who also works as a level one football coach for the Tottenham Hotspur Foundation and has coached children at local special schools.

"They are looking at the processes used in the current models of social care and how it can be made easier for the users and cheaper for the council."

John's role is to bring the views of those supported by the council into the heart of designing new services.

"I think we can draw on our own experiences and skills – I can look at proposals and think 'what could this mean to me?', 'What does this mean first hand?'"

"At the moment what's in place may take too long and cost too much. We all want to make it quicker and simpler."

Councillor Sachin Rajput, Barnet's Cabinet Member for Adult Social Services, sees projects like Right to Control and the Lean Programme as essential if the council is to continue to provide a high quality service in the face of funding cuts. "We need to make sure that every penny the council has for looking after adults with complex needs is spent as wisely and as fairly as possible. We all know that spending cuts are coming so we have to look at how we can develop a service by ways other than simply spending more money.

"Making our services simpler and more economical will be a real challenge for us over the coming years."



Print your own parking permit

More than 76 percent of the borough's motorists are now using the council's secure online service to print parking permits from the comfort of their own homes.

The system, which also allows amendments to be made to existing permits, was introduced to provide residents with a more cost-effective and modern way of accessing the parking service.

Residents who live and park their vehicles within Controlled Parking Zones (CPZs) are required to display a valid parking permit to avoid receiving a penalty charge notice.

By renewing online, permits are no longer produced either on 1st or 15th of each month, but instead commence from the date of purchase.

The online service is currently only open to existing permit account holders.

Residents who do not have access to the internet are still able to purchase permits and vouchers by telephoning 0845 301 0206.

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

WWW



Picture courtesy of the BBC

The borough in film

Did you know each time an Eastenders character 'dies' the council's coffers receive a boost?

From the residents of Albert Square weeping at the side of Frank Butcher's grave to Harry Potter's Hermione searching for her parents, Barnet is regularly seen by millions of viewers on both the big and small screen.

On average, camera crews, make-up artists and wardrobe stylists roll into town every other day to shoot scenes for their latest blockbuster film, TV series or commercial, using Barnet as their backdrop.

Among the borough's most popular filming locations is the iconic Hampstead Garden Suburb, a recent

setting for the forthcoming instalment of the Harry Potter saga, 'Harry Potter and Deathly Hallows – part one'.

Used for its distinctive architecture, Hollywood

chose the area to shoot scenes of the lead female character Hermione, played by actress Emma Watson, entering her parent's house, a scene which also appears in the film's trailer.

Other major feature films shot in Barnet include 'Sixty Six' set in Golders Green, 'Nowhere Boy' in East Finchley and 'Huge', filmed on the Stonegrove/Spur Road Estate as well as 'Nine' starring Nichole Kidman, Sophia Loren, Judy Dench, Daniel Day Lewis.

Sir Alan Sugar's 'The Apprentice', comedy series 'The Inbetweeners' and Jamie Oliver's new reality show are among the many other popular TV programmes which have discovered Barnet as an ideal place to film.

Over the years the borough has also played a leading role in one of the nation's favourite soaps.

Many famous Eastenders characters which have 'passed on' in storylines can often be seen having their funeral at Hendon cemetery.



Picture courtesy of the BBC

With funerals often a large affair, the cemetery's location is a popular choice for producers as it allows filming to take place with minimal disruption and away from the prying lenses of photographers.

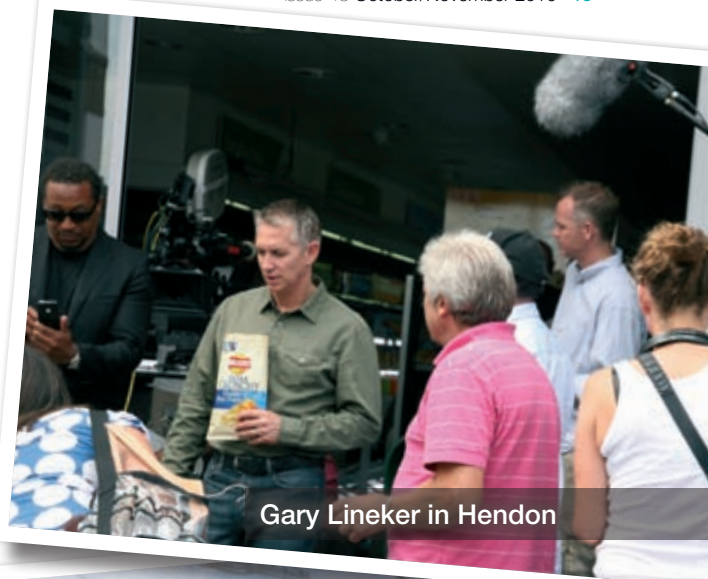
The borough also regularly attracts large companies filming commercials. Recently West Hendon played host to ex-England footballer Gary Lineker and his co-star, singer Lionel Richie, during the filming of their latest Walkers Crisp advert.

Other companies to use Barnet for their commercials include Cadburys, HSBC, Subway sandwiches, Coca-Cola and the Football Premier League.

Reel Film Locations, who oversee filming in the borough on the council's behalf, receive more than 100 enquiries from film crews every month. They look after all aspects of filming from parking arrangements, liaising with the emergency services, offering advice on where and when to film as well as making sure residents and traders are not inconvenienced.

As Barnet Council's contractors, their main aim is to bring money into the borough by encouraging production companies to choose Barnet as their preferred location. All filming fees the council collects are then re-invested straight back into services.

Dennis Firminger from Reel Film Locations, said: "Over the past five years we have seen a five fold increase in the filming done in the borough. This is now a multi billion pound industry in London and the South East. It exists because London is such a film friendly city and is now ranked third in the world after Los Angeles and New York."



Gary Lineker in Hendon



Filming for Harry Potter in the Hampstead Garden Suburb



A film crew uses Barnet as its backdrop

Student Finance goes national

On January 24 2011, Barnet Student Finance will close after handing over responsibility for the borough's university and college student grants and loans to Student Finance England.

Please direct enquiries after that date to Student Finance England on 0845 300 50 90. Further information can be found at www.direct.gov.uk/studentfinance.

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Turn your talent into a career

Have you ever wanted to develop a talent into a career but don't know how? If so, then Talent Week could be your first step in making your dream a reality. Talent Week will run during the half term break (25 – 29 October) and will be coming to the Central Court at Brent Cross Shopping Centre, running each day from 11am – 6pm. So if you are aged between 13 – 21 years old this could be what have been waiting for.

Do you have an interest in sport, music or art? Have you ever thought about a career in retail, construction or the army? Then come along and meet the promotional partners who can provide you with information on the range of career opportunities available to you.

Talent Week schedule is:

Monday and Tuesday

Science – experiments and demonstrations by the Science Museum

Wednesday

Craft and Creativity – T-shirt making and structure building

Thursday

Education Options – workshops to help you find your talent with Middlesex University and Barnet College

Friday

Positive Activities – fun and exciting activities to view and take part in.

Youth and Connexions Personal Advisors will be there to offer guidance on gaining the right qualifications and the best courses on offer. So who knows, you could be on your way to beginning a whole new career in something you enjoy!

“We believe talent week provides a unique opportunity to work with Barnet Council to help raise the aspirations of young people in their community” says Tom Nathan, CEO of Brent Cross.



For more information visit

www.talentweekbusiness.com or call 0800 389 8312.

WWW

What's on in Barnet? October November

Big Draw

Date: 25 – 29 October

The RAF Museum exhibits members of the Guild of Aviation Artists at work.

For further information call 020 8358 4896 or visit www.rafmuseum.org.uk/london

Phoenix Cinema: 100 Years On

Date: 2 October – 9 January 2011

Free exhibition at Church Farmhouse Museum marks the centenary of the Phoenix Cinema in East Finchley, re-opening after extensive restoration.

Call 020 8359 3942 or visit www.churchfarmhousemuseum.co.uk

Youth Music Week

Date: 27 October – 3 November

Youth Music Week puts young people's music making on the map. Including free taster workshops, performances and talks.

Visit www.youthmusic.org.uk for a list of all events.

Barnet Dance Fusion at Finchley Theatre

Date: 27 October, 10am – 4.30pm,

A showcase of 5 different styles of dance with a performance.

To be a spectator call 020 8359 3540 or email elizabeth.sacre@barnet.gov.uk

October Uni

Date: 25 – 29 October

Enrol on some fantastic courses including fashion, cooking, film and sports.

For more information visit www.futureversity.org or call 0800 389 8312.

Stick Man

Date: 26 – 31 October

Presented by Scamp Theatre bounces back to the stage. Call 020 8369 5454 or visit www.artsdepot.co.uk

Working hours

Mark Rimmer, 56, has worked as a registrar for 23 years and as joint Head of Barnet and Brent for the past year. He lives in Hertfordshire with his wife Alison. Mark was awarded the OBE in 2008 for his services to civil registration and citizenship.

Q What is the most bizarre ceremony you have conducted?

A The most interesting wedding ceremony was on the centre spot at Wembley Stadium. Bride and groom were dressed in full England football kit with 200 guests in their favourite club strip. Walking out to 'Three Lions on my shirt' and getting everyone to stand for the National Anthem blasting out of the sound system was quite surreal. It of course enabled me to welcome everyone with the immortal words 'Hello Wembley', priceless! Conducting the first citizenship ceremony in February 2004 was huge, with more than 400 people in attendance and media from all over the world. With Prince Charles and David Blunkett on the guest list, it was a nerve wracking experience.

Q Have there been any ceremonies which have not gone quite to plan?

A Most of them!! Not really, the huge majority go smoothly and don't present many problems.

Q On what can be an emotional day, have you ever had to fight back the tears yourself?

A You tend to get somewhat immune to the emotional side of the job. In some ways you know you've done your job well if it's emotional for all present.

Q What would be your one piece of advice on planning a ceremony?

A Don't get too hung up on detail. Accept that things will not go strictly according to plan. Just enjoy the day and relax.

Q After a busy week of ceremonies how do you unwind?

A I play golf whenever I get the opportunity. I wanted to be a golf professional but wasn't quite good enough. Not sure it's that relaxing, being the most frustrating game in the world, but it keeps me sane.

For more information visit
www.barnet.gov.uk/community-living

www

