

CHURCHES TOGETHER FOR CHIPPING BARNET

Justice and Peace Newsletter 25

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1. NOT THE VALLEY CENTRE?

Good news from Barnet Churches Action: the leases for the new Community Centre on Mays Lane are about to be signed, building has begun and should be finished by June 2015. The Valley Centre, which has been on the Dollis Valley Estate for 23 years, will close in August 2015 so that the site can be cleared. Eventually there will be 616 new homes in the area, of better quality than the existing ones, with three access roads instead of the present single one, so that the area will no longer be an 'estate' but part of the Mays Lane-Underhill community.

The new housing will be managed by L & Q, a London Housing Association. They will sell or rent 386 of the homes at market rate as a way of securing income to build more homes to rent to people from council waiting lists. The Borough of Barnet has been involved in the planning stages of the regeneration but they have provided no money and will not be involved in its management. The developers – Countryside Properties PLC – call their new development Brook Valley Gardens, giving a fresh start for the people living there.

The need for the work of the Valley Centre will remain, because there are some areas of deprivation not just in the Dollis Valley but in the Mays Lane, Underhill and Chesterfield Road areas. So should it be given a new name? It has served the Dollis Valley well but should the new centre have a name that indicates its wider reach? Ideas please to Rosemary Watkins on 8364 8756.

The Directors of Barnet Churches Action (and Rosemary) are content with the proposed layout of the new centre. It will give space for all the present activities as well as some new ones, including a café. There will be extra paid staff and scope for volunteers of all sorts. Barnet Council will be using the centre for their advice services, as before. The back of the building will be used as a nursery, under separate management.

But there is a big problem: car parking. The local parking regulations mean that it will be really difficult for the people running the centre and the nursery, and those visiting it who may be bringing in elderly people and young children. We are urged to contact our local Councillors to beg them to come and look at the site and the surrounding roads to see how the parking regulations could be amended to allow some daytime parking.

Barnet Churches Action is now a Limited Company. There are four Directors drawn from CTfCB churches; its members are the representatives of the CTfCB churches. For more information see www.ctfcb.org.uk/valley-centre and Justice and Peace Newsletters 21 (November 2013) and 23 (May 2014). Past copies of the Newsletter can be downloaded from the CTfCB website www.ctfcb.org.uk.

The inspiration for the Valley Centre came from the High Barnet Local Ecumenical Partnership and was opened in 1991. Some of the experiences gained from the project were incorporated into a process called Building Bridges of Hope at the Churches' Commission on Mission, in which Ron Ram was a prime mover. Ron believes that churches can be revitalised by helping local communities to develop and realise community projects. He is now part of a new process: Building Effective Community Ventures, to support groups of people drawn together round a common cause. For details of its aims, workbook and forum, see www.servingcommunities.org.uk.



2. EMMAUS

By good luck, the arrival of Terry Waite for the official opening of the Emmaus shop at 11 High Street Barnet on 20th September coincided with the Emmaus van returning from its morning deliveries and

collections, so everybody was able to help with the unloading.

Carol Moeke thanks the Society of Friends, Lloyds Community Fund, Waitrose, the Methodist Guild and other donors for their support: "Our biggest thanks goes to our customers and donors. ...Your support has made it a thriving and successful addition to the High Street. What is more important is that the success of the shop is a major boost to our aim of changing life's circumstances for homeless people."

The shop has a new manager - Valerie Wood - who joined at the beginning of October.

Emmaus has been chosen as the nominated charity for this year's High Barnet Christmas Fayre on Sunday 7th December. As part of the celebrations, the shop will be open from 12 till 5.

For details on how you can help, see their website www.emmaus.org.uk/barnet or make contact by phone on 020 8440 8342

3. WAITROSE

Waitrose in The Spires considers itself as part of the community of Barnet and through their Community Matters scheme they give something back in a number of ways:

- Each month, the branch donates £1000 to good causes nominated by their customers, divided between three different organisations according to the number of green tokens put in the box. To nominate a local good cause, fill in a form at the Welcome Desk.
- There is a bin placed near the exit for contributions in kind to the Chipping Barnet Food Bank, with a notice explaining which sorts of goods are most welcome.
- Staff members at Waitrose (the Partners) are willing to volunteer their time for good causes, for example by driving a lorry or helping to organise a fundraising event. To nominate an organisation needing help, fill in a form at the Welcome Desk.

4. LENT APPEAL

The Council of CTfCB received no formal proposals about the Lent Appeal for 2015 so the Executive Committee decided that in view of the terrible situation in the Middle East, where so many people have been forced from their homes and are struggling to survive, the Lent Appeal in 2015 should look beyond the borders of Barnet to help an organisation that is working to support them. They have selected Embrace the Middle East, a Christian organisation that is tackling poverty and injustice with projects in Lebanon, Jordan, Israel and Palestine and supporting the refugees from Syria. For information, see their website www.embrace.me.org and the September 2014 issue of the J and P Newsletter.

5. KIRCHENTAG IN STUTTGART

A warm invitation has been received to go to the 35th German Protestant Kirchentag in Stuttgart from 3 to 7 June 2015. They are expecting 5,000 participants from all corners of the globe. See the English-language website www.kirchentag.de/english. For a brochure, contact Natalie Hoge, responsible for the International Visitor Service at international@kirchentag.de.

6. CHAPLAINCY AT BARNET COLLEGE

There is now a Multifaith Room at the Barnet College Wood Street site, open for use by students and staff. Clergy from Churches Together for Chipping Barnet are providing services one day a week, and an Imam from the North Finchley Mosque on another day. They are also in discussion with a local synagogue. At present, the Reverends Chris Ferris and Tristan Chapman are representing CTfCB. So far, the response has been good and it is hoped that the Multifaith Room will provide opportunities for group discussions and one-to-one conversations as well as services.

I wish all my readers a Very Happy Christmas and Peaceful New Year.

Please send comments and contributions to the next edition of the Newsletter to jennyremfry@btinternet.com