



Libraries: the fight goes on

By Daphne Chamberlain

Our libraries are not closed or downsized yet. Although Barnet Council is standing by the “three options” consultation which would certainly see this happening, campaigners are urging all supporters of our libraries to keep fighting for them. The campaign has already attracted the national press, and the message is that it is not too late to get involved. This is what they suggest:

Sign the petition

Alasdair Hill, organiser of the enormously well supported petition against cutting the library service, spoke at the Council meeting last month. His message now is that that was just the start of what will be a long campaign to keep our libraries open and viable. “The petition will remain,” he says, “and large scale protests are being planned so please keep in touch.” He can be emailed by clicking on the icon next to his name on the petition page: <https://you.38degrees.org.uk/petitions/no-to-closure-of-barnet-libraries>

He thanked all the supporters who turned up at the Town Hall, saying: “It really demonstrated the level of anger the people of Barnet have over these library plans.”

Contact your MPs

All three Barnet MPs have come out against the Council’s policy. With the General Election only weeks away, campaigners point out that the MPs know the importance of listening to their constituents. All three are Conservative, which naturally means they

have links with Barnet Council’s (very narrow) Conservative majority.

The MP for our area, Finchley and Golders Green, is Mike Freer, former Barnet Council Leader. He can be contacted at mike.freer.mp@parliament.uk.

Go along to the hustings

Age UK Barnet, Barnet Seniors Assembly and Friends in Need are holding public meetings, where the Parliamentary candidates can be questioned on their policies for the over-55s. Policies include libraries. The Finchley and Golders Green candidates will be at the Ann Owens Centre, Oak Lane, on Tuesday 21 April, 10am – 12noon.

The Council are expected to come up with concrete proposals for each library at a meeting in June or July. This will follow analysis of the consultation, and will be voted on. Library supporters will be making their voices heard, and hope that councillors will give thought to the strength of feeling shown throughout the borough.



Library closure protesters at the Barnet Council meeting at the Town Hall on 3 March.

Photo by Mike Coles

Bubbles? No trouble!

By Ellie Farquhar-Smith

Louis Pearl is ‘The Amazing Bubbleman’ and the world’s leading Bubbleologist! During his show he does amazing things such as making square bubbles and smoke-filled bubbles; he even puts children inside bubbles and puts towers of bubbles on top of people’s heads. I really enjoyed this show at artsdepot at the end of March, so I asked if I could interview Louis to find out more about him. So here is what he had to say to me...

Ellie: What is the strangest thing you have put in a bubble?

Louis: Once I was performing at a wedding and I was asked to put the bride and groom into a large rainbow-shaped tube bubble. The groom had had a little too much to drink and he found it hard to stand still. It was impossible but hilarious.

Ellie: Most people use washing up liquid to make bubbles, do you have a special formula?

Louis: I have always said that, in the bubble business, the problem is the solution. A simple and easy recipe is water and original Fairy Liquid. About 16 parts water to 1 part Fairy. To make the bubbles stay moist, I recommend adding some glycerine. To get the super big bubbles you need to add gums that allow the bubbles to stretch... try guar or xanthan gum.

Ellie: Do you have any celebrity fans?

Louis: I’ve done private shows for The Sultan of Brunei, Don Johnson, and the late actor Robin Williams. The show for Williams was about 20 years ago when he had a huge party for his son’s birthday. It was



a big fun show and I felt very happy after that performance. Robin came up after the show and shook my hand. I was aware that he was the only person in that house who understood the feeling you get after a good stage show.

Ellie: I hear you have a Blue Peter Badge, how did you get it?

Louis: Blue Peter came to my show in Edinburgh two

years ago. They filmed me putting their host in a bubble and did a little interview. This month, I’m going to Manchester to be on set at Blue Peter, so I will get a SECOND badge.

Ellie: Do you do children’s birthday parties?

Louis: Yes, I do, and you’d be surprised how old those children are getting. I’ve already done two 50th birthdays this year.

Louis Pearl is performing at The Udderbelly Festival at London’s Southbank Centre from 15-19 April. For tickets call the box office on 0844 5458282 or see the website www.amazing-bubblemanuk.co.uk.



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