



Waitrose letters continued

Questionnaire questioned

As most of your readers will have received and filled in the Councillors' Questionnaire to residents regarding the proposed Waitrose scheme, we wish to draw attention to two of the questions, the answers to which are open to being cynically twisted to appear to show support for building a Waitrose where none may have been intended.

We are personally against the Waitrose scheme. But we strongly agree that a full, independent, representative and balanced measure of the views of the wider population of East Finchley is needed. We gather that response rates to this survey have been high.

Leading questions

While there will be good information here, Question 11 is leading ('If Waitrose could be persuaded to modernise the existing library instead of relocating it, how would this make you feel about the new development?'), and we therefore argue that no sound conclusions can or should be drawn from it. A questionable scenario is posed which makes it sound as if Waitrose would make all the decisions, not the Council, and permission to build a supermarket should not be linked to restoring an unrelated public building in this way. We have encountered widespread criticism of this question, and of Question 4, which poses a hypothetical question ('if Waitrose were built, would you use it?'), which has nothing to do with whether the supermarket should be built. However, attempts could be made by those pushing the scheme to argue that a positive answer demonstrates support for building it, despite a negative answer to Question 1 ('What do you think about the proposed Waitrose?').

This survey has begun the process of consultation and as the first attempt to put numbers on the opinions of East Finchley residents, will be the focus of a lot of attention. All the more important, then, to join the call made at the Council Policy Conference on 13 February for the Current Administration to enter into full public consultation before any decisions are made and before a planning application is received, and to offer an extended period of consultation once the application has been lodged.

Yours sincerely
Rick and Kathryn Scorza
Durham Road, N2

Injection of Life

You asked for a response from East Finchley residents in favour of the proposed Waitrose development. I am wholly in favour for the following reasons:

1. Waitrose is a quality supermarket whose parent, John Lewis, is a thoroughly honourable business. If they say that they will spend money to improve the area, they will.

2. Like many of my neighbours, I use a car to drive to supermarkets. A local Waitrose would obviate the need for car journeys.

3. A spanking new Waitrose would enhance the area. Years ago we had a Sainsburys, a Freeman Hardy & Willis, a Boots, a Comet (which was a Freeborns furniture store before that) and a fabulous garden shop called Gibbs (now Corys chemist). East Finchley is dying and needs an injection of life.

4. The proposed site is a complete eyesore as it presently stands. Both the minicab site and the ghastly Park House would not be missed. One look at the Waitrose in Holloway Road, Islington, should convince the

doubters that supermarkets can be architecturally pleasing.

I do have some sympathy for the shops, but solicitors, travel agents and surveyors don't need shop premises - just offices. Similarly, a minicab stand could be operated from anywhere. Waitrose might be prevailed upon to incorporate some of the displaced premises within its new building.

5. It has been suggested that a vast increase in traffic would result. I believe that with proper traffic management, residents would not notice much difference. We locals wouldn't need to use our cars to travel to other areas to shop and if the proposed new Tesco is built opposite the library the 'shopping' traffic would, I believe, even out between the two. Anyway, we already have parking restrictions in force.

6. Waitrose will need staff - local staff. This will be a benefit.

7. The existing library is a lovely building and should be preserved. If it does not currently meet statutory requirements and upgrading is deemed too expensive, why not impose a condition on Waitrose that they pay for the upgrade instead of a new library?

8. Finally, I fail to see how a new shop would destroy the 'village' feeling of East Finchley. If we took it to our hearts, just as we have all the other businesses, it could well become a valuable asset to our community and should be welcomed.

Yours faithfully,
David R Padbury,
Summerlee Avenue, N2

Jam Tomorrow?

As I sat in traffic on Monday 3 February, taking 45 minutes to get from Highgate to East Finchley, a journey that usually takes 10 minutes, it made me think how this would be the norm if the new Waitrose proposal goes ahead.

Today's traffic was due to a particularly bad accident at Henley's corner. This can be endured as a one-off occasion but not on a daily basis.

Keren McConnell
Leopold Road, N2

What village atmosphere?

I would like to point out that I am a resident living in East Finchley, and my views only contain my thoughts on the issue from a 'local' point of view.

What quality retail food outlets do we currently have in East Finchley?

The answer is simple, none, unless Budgen's has suddenly become a 'high' quality food outlet in which case I apologise!!

Unfortunately for us, our high street is uninspiring. I never normally want to spend any more time than I have to there because many of the outlets are unappealing both in appearance, and in the service they provide. I think our local council should invest some money in new shop fronts for the street, which would help to face-lift most of the wrinkles it currently possesses.

The introduction of a new Waitrose supermarket would be a foundation for a chain reaction of up-market retail outlets opening in the area to revitalise an image that needs to be brought into the 21st century.

The library would also be considerably better, both in size and facilities, as well as being new, and would accommodate all the needs of the local people who go there, including the disabled.

I have taken a close look at other high streets in other areas, and I am

Labour Questionnaire Results

I would like to thank everyone who returned questionnaires. We carried out this consultation because of the complete failure of the Tory council to do so. We believe strongly that the voice of our local community should be heard. Your views really are important to us and it has been extremely interesting and enlightening to read all the comments submitted.

The response rate has been very high, reflecting the strength of feeling on both sides. We sent out Waitrose Questionnaires to the 5700 households in East Finchley ward and to date have received 1350 back. That's a 23% response rate. An average (non-traffic) council consultation usually gets a response of between 10% and 15%.

As councillors we believe strongly in the economic regeneration and sustainability of East Finchley's town centre. On the basis of your responses the majority of you, like me, don't believe that these Waitrose plans support that end.

The questionnaires showed that 60% of respondents oppose the plans, 82% are worried about the traffic implications and many of you also expressed concerns about the impact on current shops in East Finchley the impact on Cherry Tree Woods and particularly concerns about relocation of the library. However, only 33% of respondents do most or all of their shopping in East Finchley, 49% already drive to another town centre or complex to do their main household shopping and many commented that they would prefer to have sufficient choice to be able to do that in East Finchley. Overall people were worried about the appropriateness and scale of the suggested Waitrose site. No attempt has been made by the Tory Council or Waitrose to answer or address any of these problems.

So it is clear that while a majority of you are opposed to the Waitrose plans, very many of you are concerned about the viability and vitality of our town centre. A case needs to be made for economic regeneration and support of local businesses. I can't support this Waitrose proposal but will be pressing urgently for cohesive plans for the economic regeneration of our town centre, held in scale with the needs of our local community, plans which must undergo full examination by and consultation with local people.

East Finchley Councillor, Phil Yeoman

(Under planning law, Cllrs Alison Moore and Colin Rogers, who both sit on planning committees would be barred from voting on this issue if they expressed an opinion beforehand. They will of course take your views into account.)

A Note on Figures

Figures are expressed in % values, but because not everybody ticked a box for each question these will not total 100% for each question. The figure for each box represents the percentage of all respondents who ticked that box.

1. What do you think about the proposed Waitrose

	%
strongly support	16
support	13
neither support nor oppose	10
oppose	14
strongly oppose	46

2. Do you currently shop in East Finchley

yes	81
no	8

3. If the answer to question 2. is 'yes' do you:

do all your shopping in East Finchley	6
most of your shopping in East Finchley	27
some of your shopping in East Finchley	47
very little of your shopping in East Finchley	12

4. If Waitrose was built would you use it

very often	7
often	23
not much	32
not at all	24

5. Do you currently drive to another town centre to do your main household shopping?

yes	49	no	43
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If yes would the new store mean you would:

drive to the new shop in East Finchley	14
be less likely to drive at all	16
not affect where you shop or how you get there	30

6. The proposed development would include 149 parking spaces, which is likely to generate incoming traffic from surrounding areas. How concerned are you about this:

not at all concerned	17
concerned	22
very concerned	60

We are still collecting questionnaires and will continue to do so until the end of March. Please send in yours if you would still like to do so. Questionnaires were hand-delivered to every household in East Finchley, but if you didn't receive one and would like to, please call the Labour Party office on 020 8883 0411. Final results will be posted in the window of the Labour Party office at 38 Church Lane.

7. The proposed development would be next to Cherry Tree Woods, would you be concerned about the impact upon the park:

not at all concerned	20
concerned	21
very concerned	57

8. How often do you use the existing library:

not at all	29
up to twice a year	19
about once a month	29
weekly	22

9. What do you use the Library for (tick all relevant boxes):

loaning books	63
study space	14
music library	27
internet access	6
the community hall	8
don't use the library	17

10. How would it affect you if East Finchley library moved from its current building to above the proposed Waitrose (opposite the Tube). Would it be:

very convenient	12
quite convenient	8
not make any difference to you	39
cause you some inconvenience	18
cause you major inconvenience	21

11. If Waitrose could be persuaded to modernise the existing library instead of re-locating it. How would this make you feel about the new development.

much more enthusiastic	11
more enthusiastic	15
not change your view	63
less enthusiastic	2
more hostile	5

12. Do you live:

nearest the proposed Waitrose	34
nearest the existing Library	52
not very near to either	12

beginning to feel that ours is one of the shabbiest in North London, travel around and see for yourself...

I feel a lot of people locally would walk/drive a short distance to the new Waitrose to enjoy all the benefits a high quality store could offer its customers.

Many people have expressed the opinion that it would destroy the 'village atmosphere'. I would like to know which atmosphere they are referring to because I must be missing something. That is what I want and I'm sure many others want, but we just don't have the right ingredients for it in our present condition.

Leon Simmons,
Address supplied, N2.

Make up your mind

(Copy of letter sent to Councillors Alison Moore, Colin Rogers and Phil Yeoman)

Dear Councillors

Re: Waitrose in East Finchley.

In a letter I have just seen from 'Warning on Waitrose', it is claimed that "some or all of the Councillors were active in getting the development proposal off the ground in the first place" and even that "Phil Yeoman stated that he is pro Waitrose".

Since this scheme is so clearly inimical to the interests of our local community, I trust that there has been some misunderstanding - I cannot imagine that any of you

would support opening a large store for the benefit of Highgate residents and at the expense of the East Finchley residents whom you represent. Indeed, in your shoes I would regard these assertions as verging on the libellous.

I hope, therefore, that you are able to reassure me that all three of you are indeed well aware of the strength of feeling in East Finchley in favour of supporting our local shopkeepers; and that you will be making a very clear public declaration of your hostility to the proposed Waitrose development. I look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely
Denis R Johnston
Lincoln Road N2