

Hackney Gazette

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50p



IS YOUR KID THE CUTEST?



- see p13

Top police praise for family of murdered teen Shaquille Smith

- see p5



In the pink

ELLIE O'CONNELL and Isabelle Franchini, both 10, had a lovely day out at Hackney's very own party in the park where they were joined by hundreds of revellers for a day of colourful attractions including a bouncy castle and a magic show. The event was organised by the De Beauvoir Residents' Association, which made sure the kids were all smiles by providing them with a free toy, a book and a goody bag.

For the full story, see page 4

GUNMAN NABBED IN SIEGE

Streets cordoned off for three hours

by LEE PEART

A MAN has been charged in connection with a dramatic three-hour armed siege which brought Dalston to a standstill.

Armed officers were called after reports of a disturbance in a flat above a shop in Kingsland High Street on Monday morning.

Residents were told to stay indoors, shop workers arriving to work had to wait behind police cordons and surrounding streets were cordoned off whilst the siege unfolded.

Akilan Kasinathan, a Tesco Extra worker, said: "I saw armed police in the street pointing guns up at a flat's window and we were all told to stay inside."

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History lessons – Sinjin Maysmith Cadpractice III and Chris Snelson, far left, provide the entertainment

In the pink – Ellie O’Connell and Isabelle Franchini, both 10, had a lovely time, middle

In a spin – Niyazi Mustafa, four, shows off his new tricks, left

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It's a party in the park

A HISTORIC Hackney square staged a fun-packed festival of frivolity on Saturday afternoon.

Hundreds of residents enjoyed fun and frolics in De Beauvoir’s beautiful public garden square.

Even the overcast skies couldn’t dampen the spirits as revellers enjoyed a variety of spectacular attractions.

The colourful event was the fifth annual children’s “party in the park” organised by the De Beauvoir

Residents’ Association.

Among the free activities for kids was a bouncy castle, face-painting and a magician.

Each youngster was also handed a free toy and book and a goody bag.

They also got the chance to design their own T-shirts as well as learn drumming or have a football kick-about.

There were also arts and craft stalls and marquees, plus a fire engine from nearby Kingsland fire station as well

as the St John Ambulance Brigade in attendance.

There was also live music performed by a brass band, plus refreshments and a raffle.

“The event is for everyone living within the vicinity of the square including those on nearby estates,” said residents’ association secretary, Paul Bolding.

“Fortunately the rain held off and everyone thoroughly enjoyed themselves,” he added.

Public inquiry for Fields pitch battle

by PETER SHERLOCK

CONTROVERSIAL plans to build an artificial sports pitch in a popular park will now be debated at a public inquiry.

Hackney Council wants to build the fenced and floodlit pitch in an underused area of London Fields.

But conservationists maintain the green space should be protected from development and kept as open space.

Syd Bolton, the chair of The London Fields Preservation Society welcomed news the government’s planning inspectorate will now debate the plans at a public inquiry in December.

He said: “Enclosing sections of the Fields behind wire mesh and laying large swathes of tarmac across the grass is more in keeping with a prison yard and a grand prix track than an ancient common.”

Battle lines have been drawn since the local authority announced the plans more than two years ago.



Protesters, from left to right, Russell Whitbread, Cameron Jarvis, Nichola Schild, Syd Bolton, Philip Schild, Graham Judkins, Rosalyn Fairman, Anne Hogan, with three-year-old Stella Judkins, Tom Whitbread and Joan Cormack pictured at London Fields last year

It is proposed that the paved pitch, 30m long by 18m wide, and surrounded by a two-metre high fence, will be built on a former gravel pitch to the west of the popular leisure spot. It will provide space for basketball and five-a-side football.

The London Field User Group, which helped draw up the plans, believes there is plenty of support for the proposals.

Chair Mike Martin said: “We are more or less confident that the plans will go ahead.

Most people are interested in going for sports facilities.”

Those opposing the sports pitch proposals represented just a small “clique”, according to Mr Martin.

The public inquiry will take place at Hackney Town Hall in Mare Street on December 9.

An independent government inspector will make a final decision on the plans after hearing evidence from both sides.

Youngsters seize upon democracy

SCHOOL children in the borough have been given a new voice following the election of members for two student councils.

The young democrats, who will represent Year 5, nine-year-old and 10-year-old kids in the Stoke Newington and Upper Clapton areas, were

sworn in at a special ceremony at The Learning Trust’s Tomlinson Centre in Dalston.

Cllr Muttalip Unluer, the speaker of Hackney, who attended the ceremony in Queensbridge Road, said: “It is a good initiative as it gives young people a taste of democracy and it prepares them for

the future.

“I wish the new cluster councils good luck in their new roles.”

The members of the councils, who were elected by their fellow pupils, will meet once a month to discuss issues affecting their schools.

They will be given a budget

to spend on projects, including an anti-bullying week, which is planned for November.

A spokeswoman for The Learning Trust said: “It is hoped that the councils will represent the voice of the under 12s through neighbourhood youth forums and the youth parliament.”

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