

Hawk-eyed neighbours help to crack drug-dealing

Raiding four cannabis farms, issuing 28 warrants and making 18 arrests were all in a day's work for Redbridge Police targeting drug dealers.

Codenamed Operation Hawk, police started work at 6am on Wednesday of last week focusing on street level drug dealing and cannabis farms.

The operation was based on information supplied by members of the community.

A 43-year-old man of Seven Kings and a 43-year-old woman of Wanstead were arrested on suspicion of cultivating cannabis and possession with intent to supply. They have been bailed and will return to Ilford Police Station, High Road, Ilford, in May.

Det Sgt Naomi Edwards said: We encourage residents to report suspected drug activity in their neighbourhoods so that we can deal with the issues immediately. We want to make it stop".

■ **If you have information about anyone who may be dealing or growing cannabis, call Crimestoppers on 0800 555 111.**

Post office staff strike splits opinion over franchise plans

Barkingside branch may be moved into shop to save cash

by Lizzie Dearden
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» Barkingside and South Woodford post offices were closed on Saturday as staff walked out on strike.

They are unhappy at plans to turn the Barkingside branch into a franchise.

But opinion is divided over the possible merits of closing the post office and moving it into a shop.

In a debate on community forum Streetlife, user Mark H said the plan "made sense".

Subsidised

He added: "The need for standalone post offices is rapidly declining as people move with the times - why should they continue to make a loss for the few people who are lagging behind?"

But others pointed out that many people without access to a computer rely on post offices.

Ron J branded the closure of Ilford's crown office in Clements Road and its move to WHSmith, a "disaster".



■ **Barkingside post office was closed on Saturday as part of a national staff strike**

He added: "Barkingside post office is always busy, with the queue running outside."

"Why spend £2million tarding up the area outside the library and close down the post office? Madness."

Dee S said that staff at WHSmith were not "friendly or helpful" but said the franchise of Becontree post of-

Why spend £2m tarding up the area outside the library and close down the post office? Madness

Ron J, streetlife.com

ice in the Nisa shop, in Woodward Road, Dagenham, was "a move for the better".

Barkingside is among 70 crown offices, which are directly run by the Post Office, earmarked for "retail partners".

Network and sales director Kevin Gilliland said crown branches are losing

£40million a year and being subsidised by public money.

He said: "This cannot continue."

But for the Communication Workers Union (CWU) members on strike, the fate of Barkingside added to concerns over jobs and pay.

CWU deputy general secretary Dave Ward called the franchise plans "destructive".

He said: "The Post Office's plans are short-sighted and would rob the network of the most productive offices while simultaneously putting hundreds of jobs at risk and potentially damaging local economies."

"We'd like to see a better vision for a successful network which maintains services in the heart of communities alongside quality jobs."

A Post Office spokesman said no conversations have yet happened with retailers about the Barkingside office, which is planned to be franchised by April 2015.

What do you think?

Join the conversation on streetlife.com

Pupils raise £1,438 for Macmillan

A Goodmayes school has donated more than £1,000 to a cancer charity after a teaching assistant set out to raise awareness following the death of her father.

Pupils and parents at Al Noor Primary School, Green Lane, raised £1,438 for Macmillan Cancer Support by using their creative flair, helping others and eating cakes together.

Over several weeks, a series of fundraising activities were organised which were kicked off with an assembly led by fundraising manager Laura Bazzoni, who gave an insight into the work of Macmillan.

Teaching assistant Sara Bhatti said: "I wanted to raise money for Macmillan and raise awareness of cancer after my father passed away with pancreatic cancer in 2008, after a six-month battle."

"Macmillan were there to support us so I wanted to give something back. After holding my own coffee morning, I decided to bring the fundraising to school, which was very supportive and allowed me to go ahead with my ambitious plans."

As well as themed lessons, the youngsters took part in a poster competition, and a sponsored dog-good-to-others day.

Flowers festoon churches for Easter services



■ **A huge floral cross was created by members of the congregation at Barkingside Methodist Church**

iwitness24 Photo by Ron Jeffries



■ **Flowers at St Peter's Church**

Luscious lilies, gorgeous gypsophila and fantastic freesias put a spring into Easter services held around the borough on Sunday.

More than 80 people attended the Easter Sunday service at Barkingside Methodist Church, Fremantle Road, Barkingside.

They admired a large cross decorated with the best of the spring flowers created by members of the congregation.

After the service, the cross was placed on the steps of the church as a witness of Christ's resurrection.

At St Peter's Church, Aldborough Road North, Newbury Park, the entire church was covered in flowers.

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