

Panel in danger of becoming a council sub-committee

IF Haringey Council is genuinely interested in convincing the people of Crouch End that it has their best interests at heart, the first thing it needs to do is give the Town Hall advisory panel the space it needs to make meaningful recommendations capable of gaining wide public support.

There are some who would argue that neither Haringey officers nor councillors should be allowed anywhere near the panel – that it should, effectively, be seen to be the voice of the people.

In balance, the council does need to be represented, for all kinds of reasons, but the current make-up does little to inspire confidence in the panel's independence.

At a conservative estimate, Crouch End for People has the support of about 3,000 people and the active participation of hundreds of determined campaigners. Yet it has been allocated just one place on the panel and even the Liberal Democrat suggestion, that this highly-effective and well-organised pressure group should be allowed another panel member, falls short of fair representation. In almost the same breath, the LibDems ask for a councillor in each of the three wards covering the immediate area to be added to the advisory team. The problem here is not that they don't deserve to be there, but that such a reinforcement of Haringey personnel adds to the danger of creating a panel with all the creativity and charm of a council sub-committee.

Lib Dem councillor David Winskill, however, does recognise the need to bring local expertise and energy into the panel so that "all local groups can have confidence in this process."

He suggests that an independent co-chairman be appointed alongside – wait for it – the Haringey councillor (Judy Bax) who has been charged with heading up the panel. Hornsey Historical Society goes even further, calling on Judy Bax to stand down in favour of an apolitical candidate, chosen by the committee.

Public confidence is the issue, and something has to give.

Editor Geoff Martin

Deputy Editor John Dunne

Circulation/Promotions Darren Wiggins

Production manager Philip White

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Managing director Gary Matthews

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Passion of the people must not be ignored

THE invigorating passion of an overwhelming number of Crouch End residents about the future of their Town Hall is too important for the new Haringey Council head, Charles Adje, to dismiss with unacceptable attempts of mudding the waters.

He seems to be following, from day one, the good old principle in politics according to which, if your opponent's policy is proving too popular, make it yours in the eyes of the public.

This would not be a problem if the council did indeed accept the transparently commonsensical demands by Crouch End residents that the town hall become a cultural and community centre with a 'piazza' in front, and its present car park kept as an essential support for the success of the project, instead of selling the heart of our community to greedy developers to build yet another block of flats.

Mr Adje's statements last week on this subject need to be exposed for their unfortunate attempts to confuse the public. Saying that the residents' pressure group Crouch End for People "is blowing (this issue) out of all proportion", he added that "there aren't any proposals to flog off the Town Hall."

Why was it that at the meeting of February 17, the only reason the council did not sell the town hall, there and then to developers,

Council chief executive Charles Adje outside Hornsey Town Hall.



was because a representative of CEIP vigorously questioned the figure pulled out of the council's hat that £15 million would be necessary to restore it?

No proof of how this figure had been reached could be presented and in the end the council had to give the proposal a lifeline of six more months.

Had this not happened, there would be no open day, no cultural centre, no piazza because the town hall would today be dead meat!

Mr Adje comments that the council has set up an advisory panel so people can air their views. Which panel? One which is made up of council members and their chosen political friends with a token seat for one representative of CEIP?

Can Mr Adje not realise that the very existence of an apolitical, community pressure group such as Crouch End for People is proof that the council is misusing

their position by trying all the tricks in the book to see their harmful plans succeed?

Mr Adje also says that the council is consulting the public. Even if such an obvious action had been taken properly, as opposed to a few forms distributed among a few open day visitors, the track record of Haringey Council when it comes to consultation and analysis, is not one that encourages confidence.

I wonder where Mr Adje lives. Not in Crouch End I'm sure, otherwise he would care a bit more about the genuine interests of its residents.

His agenda does not seem to coincide with the demands for a better quality of life not only for our local community but for all residents of Haringey who frequent Crouch End.

C. SOLANO
Oakfield Court
Haslemere Road, NW

FROM THE ARCHIVES

100 years ago
21 May 1904

A meeting agreed to form a league to be known as the Hampstead Passive Resistance League.

The London County Council approves a plan to erect a bandstand in Golders Hill Park. They also recommend that dogs be kept out of the old garden at Golders Hill

and perambulators only allowed up to 2pm.

A correspondent writes to complain again at the inconsiderate shepherd on Hampstead Heath who tends his hungry sheep from 4am by South Hill Park, to the detriment of the residents trying to sleep.

Another welcomes the advent of the shepherd and the sheep with the same pleasure as hearing the cuckoo in Kenwood or the thrush in Parliament Hill Fields.

Two local war are in Havering seating first time Odeon unfinished