

Allegations against Cllr Bax unfair and without foundation

We cannot believe that we have been at the same meetings of the advisory panel as the representative of Crouch End For People.

Their spokeswoman is quoted as criticising Cllr Judy Bax, Chair of the panel, accusing her of bullying her way through the meeting and steamrolling the panel.

Cllr Judy Bax has chaired every meeting in a very even-handed way. At no time has she led the panel.

The reverse is true! She has at every stage taken on board the views of members.

The conclusions about an Interim Management Scheme and the 'tripartite' approach have come out of presentations and discussions at the advisory panel during the eight months it has met. And these form the basis of the report which will be presented to Haringey Council's Executive Committee on December 21.

Maybe the comments from Crouch End For People are because their views do not accord with the majority, that there should be an interim management scheme so that arts and cultural groups can occupy spaces

HOW extremely disappointed and misrepresented I feel that Chris Freeman, chairman of Crouch End Traders' Association and owner of Dunns Bakery, should have voted in favour of the report being put forward by the council-led advisory panel.

This puts the developers before the community, means that we lose an existing asset, the car park, which is crucial not only to the future of the building as a cultural and community centre but also to the future of the livelihood of small businesses like mine in Crouch End. Judy Bax's plan will give us 'development' all over the car park. I imagine the building - 'only' four storeys high - will look not unlike a tower block lying on its side.

By not protecting the car park and recommending pay and display facility, visitors and shoppers in Crouch End will find it increasingly difficult to frequent our shops and businesses including Mr. Freeman's bakery. As for me, I don't think the cakes and Dunns will ever taste quite the same again.

TRACEY SMYTH
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vacated by council staff, proving a need and financial sustainability for these activities and also protecting the local economy.

And that (as you outlined in your report on December 3) the council and a community trust,

and a developer at a later stage, should work hand in hand co-operatively to bring Hornsey Town Hall back into public use for the benefit of local people, Haringey residents and North London as a whole.

SALLY BILLOT & BRIDGET CHERRY
(Twentieth Century Society)
CHRIS FREEMAN
(Crouch End Traders Association)
ELEANOR GREENAWAY
(Crouch End Arts Group)
MARIAN JANES
(Hornsey Conservation Committee)

KEVIN PINNOCK (Town Hall Project)
RICHARD REIDY (Friends of Hornsey Town Hall)
RAY ROGERS (Conservation expert)
LIZ SICH (Crouch End Festival Chorus)
CHARLIE SHARP & EMILY WARD
(North London Performing Arts Centre)
CHRIS WARBURTON

The ill-starred company in question (Jarvis, surprise surprise) was already in difficulties when it won the contract two years ago. Now it has astronomical debts and could well fold, if it cannot find a bank or a partner willing to bail it out.

While the PFI arrangement effectively absolves the Whittington of any financial repercussions, important new facilities have been delayed and the considerable disruption in the area will be extended long past the scheduled completion date.

Residents in the area have been more than patient, recognising that the new facilities are for the benefit of all, but their sufferance may well be exhausted by the time it takes to rescue the project and finish the works. The 'P' in PFI stands for 'Private' but in the light of the Whittington's experience, 'Perilous' seems a more appropriate description.

Looking for positives

THERE are two sides to every story. Last week a Crouch End for People representative on the Hornsey Town Hall advisory panel slammed the 'bullying' stewardship of Cllr Judy Bax. This week a dozen panel members say the reverse is true and that Cllr Bax has always been even-handed and accommodating.

Ordinary people with a keen if not obsessive interest in the future of the site must wonder where the truth lies. It would have been surprising, giving the strength of feeling on the issue, had the panel agreed unanimously on everything. But things have moved on and as in every conflict situation, the emphasis now should be on finding common ground and exploiting the positive things that have emerged from the process, rather than constantly dwelling on the negatives.

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Closing the doors

SO the advisory panel has completed its report by meeting behind closed doors, without holding a public meeting, without meeting the public and without taking into account the results of its own consultation! The contrast with the openness with which the local community – Crouch End for People and their 5000 resident supporters – have conducted themselves could not have been greater.

Only Crouch End for People took the trouble to organise packed public meetings. Their work has been fuelled by the amazing spirit of the local people and our collective belief of the good of our cause and our community.

The sadness is that the only residents who have failed to understand and experience this spirit are those very ones who sat on the advisory panel behind their closed doors.

ANNIE AITKEN
Glasslyn Road, N8

FROM THE ARCHITECT

100 years ago
10 December 1900

A pauper aged 54 is sentenced to imprisonment with hard labour to work while an inmate of the Hampstead workhouse.

A public meeting is held in town hall to protest at 'the Education Act and the misc