

Amazed by council posturing on the Town Hall panel

IN MY capacity as a curious local resident and supporter of Crouch End for People's vision for Hornsey Town Hall, I went to the meeting of the Hornsey Town Hall Advisory Panel, set up by Haringey council, last Tuesday, May 25.

Jacob O'Callaghan from Hornsey Historical Society had put forward an urgent motion in which he stated the great dissatisfaction and anger regarding the constitution of the Panel (largely composed of councillors from the ruling party and non-elected people posing as 'local residents') expressed both at the Public Meeting of April 29 and since. The Chair, Cllr. Judy Bax, said they were "not in the business of taking motions" because "this is not a formal meeting."

If it was informal, might I ask why Mr. O'Callaghan was virtually silenced and told to sit down so the meeting could "move forward"?

Covering herself, Cllr. Bax later said the representation of the group should be looked at more carefully. If we are to believe her, then why miss this ripe opportunity? Laying firm, and at least democratic, foundations for such a panel is surely the only way to move anywhere?

Crouch End for People, the campaign group of local residents which has received the support of over 3,500 people and has only one place on the panel, stated that it has still not received a response from the council about their serious concern with this issue.

To my amazement, Richard Reidy, who, in an attempt to clear his name, wrote that he is a member of this Advisory Panel as a 'local resident', was heard to pronounce himself as a representative of the elusive group Friends of Hornsey Town Hall. Might I

suggest he is perhaps not a very loyal Friend?

Cllr Adje was either not telling or did not know the truth when he declared at the Public Meeting that "the books are open". Either way it is a disgrace for our newly-elected council leader because I discovered at the meeting that the most important documents are still being withheld.

Apart from finding out that there are 40,000 listed buildings in London alone, I made another discovery, and this is a truly delightful piece of information: Delcia Keate of English Heritage told the panel that our Town Hall is one of the eight per cent of most important buildings in the country.

If the council is really listening they will already know that we residents want our Town Hall back as a cultural and community centre. This is perfectly viable and I believe Crouch End for People's proposal will prove just that, even though the highly skilled team of professional people is working, voluntarily, at a certain disadvantage (from not being shown important documents, etc.)

If the council/panel is not prepared to address the constitution of the panel itself, I would like to recommend that they listen to the voice of the people they are meant to represent, share their vision and do any moving forward in this direction rather than prevaricate considering other options.

As one local resident said to another on the Broadway last week, "If anywhere needs a cultural and community centre, it is here!"

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COMMENT

Long-term solution needed for school place provision

MUSWELL HILL is in dire need of new school places.

Desperate parents aren't looking for the moon: even temporary classrooms would delight them but thus far, nothing has been delivered by Haringey Council other than hollow promises. Even the efforts of a working group set up by the council have come to nought and while hope springs eternal, parents are fast losing hope.

The council's latest line is that the whole issue is bound up in technical and legal requirements but to desperate parents the jargon has little meaning.

Some suspect that Haringey is unwilling to act because it wants to fill up under-subscribed schools in eastern parts of the borough. But in the long term, both Muswell Hill and Crouch End will need many more places, especially when the London Plan brings hundreds more homes to the area. What is needed is a long-term solution.

The idea of the extensive TUC buildings in Crouch End being acquired for educational needs, rather than being sold off to developers (if indeed it is for sale) is likely to gather pace against this urgent need for school provision.