

CABINET CLIMBDOWN ON LAND SALES

CHARTERIS ROAD CAR PARK AND LIBRARY SITES SAFE - FOR THE MOMENT!!!

First of all our thanks and congratulations go to all Monkhams residents that supported our petition calling for a halt to the sales of the Charteris Road Car Park and Woodford Library sites. The petition, signed by over 900 of you, was presented at the last Area Committee 2 meeting and handed over at the full Council meeting on 20th September. This, together with the 3,000+ signature petition to "Save Derby Road Car Park" in South Woodford, was a powerful expression of the strength of opposition to the Cabinet's misguided policy of selling community property and was a critical factor in forcing it to think again.

A Liberal Democrat motion at the Council meeting calling on the Cabinet to reconsider the sell off proposals for allotments and car parks was immediately accepted by the Tory Leader. Although it would be nice to think that he and the Cabinet had at last seen sense, the fact of the matter is that it was more a tactical retreat in the face of a revolt by 9 of the 34 Tory councillors who had been persuaded by our arguments and the petitions and would not have backed the Cabinet if a vote had been called. **Sadly, but unsurprisingly, your 3 Monkhams Councillors were not among the 9.**

In a separate meeting the Highways Scrutiny Committee set the Cabinet a series of specific questions on the impact of sales and future developments it wants addressed before any car park sales are agreed. Of course the Cabinet could simply ignore these questions as it has done previously.

But as the voices of objection are raised ever louder and stronger and as the number of Councillors prepared to challenge the sell-off policy grows, so the position of the Cabinet weakens.

The Liberal Democrat Group of Councillors and Focus campaigners across the borough are determined to prevent the proposed land sales and the intensive development that would inevitably follow. We will continue to work with resident groups to ensure the Council spends only what it can afford. Committing £40+ million on a swimming complex in Seven Kings that cannot be justified on sports, economic and social criteria and for which the operating and maintenance costs are neither costed nor funded, is imprudent bordering on reckless. The Tory Cabinet should hang its collective head in shame for even of thinking of doing so.

You can obtain more background detail on this story and read the correspondence between Geoff Seeff and Cllr Huggett at our new Chingford and Woodford Green website www.cwglibdems.org.uk

Not having received notices of changed refuse collection days and having had rubbish pile up over two weeks, residents of Harts Grove tried to contact their Monkhams Councillors. They didn't even respond to their mobiles. In desperation the residents called Lib Dem Cllr Felicity Banks in neighbouring Roding ward, who ensured that the matter was dealt with speedily.



Woodford Arts Festival

Work is going ahead for an Arts Festival here in Woodford in October 2008.

The festival is intended to be a showcase for local talents of all kinds of visual and performing arts, whether as individuals, groups and organisations. It is intended to include events for and by young people.

The Festival is being sponsored by the Area 2 Committee who want to hear from anyone who is interested in taking part.

There will be a meeting on Wednesday 7th November at 7.30pm at the Redbridge Drama Centre, Churchfields South Woodford. Please come along if you are interested in supporting the Festival or contact

Cllr Richard Hoskins
richard.hoskins@redbridge.gov.uk
or Cllr Geoffrey Hinds
geoffrey.hinds@redbridge.gov.uk

Whipps Cross Hospital Saved

It seems we can't get away from stories about threats of closures. However, here is some (reasonably) good news. Whipps Cross Hospital, which provides our nearest A&E service as well as offering the widest range of specialist disciplines east of central London, is not to close after all. This is the conclusion of the interim report by the Director of National Clinical Excellence, Professor Alberti, following his Fit for the Future review.

This is again a victory for common sense over dogma. The professor found that the hospital served the medical needs of a wide and relatively deprived catchment area and that it would have been detrimental to close or downgrade it. He judged that it made more sense to link its work with the London teaching hospitals rather than those in Redbridge and Romford and he criticised health officials who put financial considerations before the health needs of their communities.

Funny about that - it is what Liberal Democrats from both Redbridge and Waltham Forest sitting on the cross borough health scrutiny committee have been saying for a long time and for which we, along, it must be said, with a very effective grass roots action group, have been campaigning on the streets.



Vice Chair of the cross borough health scrutiny committee, Cllr John Bease, leading the LibDem contingent on the Save Whipps Cross March earlier in the year.

The next problem, however, is that this leaves a very large question mark hanging over the future of King Georges Hospital, completed just 12 years ago. It appears likely that it will retain its A&E function but will be downgraded to a non-acute community hospital. When will they ever learn?

44-46 SNAKES LANE UPDATE

Redbridge Council has refused permission for McCarthy and Stone's revised plan to demolish the existing houses at 44-46 Snakes Lane West for redevelopment of 21 retirement apartments. Residents of Linden Crescent had been dismayed to find that the rear leg extension, which the Council had previously refused permission for, had resurfaced in the latest plan.

Residents of Linden Crescent, and Anne Crook writing on their behalf, had objected to the size and density of the development and the rear leg extension on the grounds that it would be too near the boundary with Linden Crescent and would overlook residents' gardens, reducing their light and privacy and would also impact adversely on the adjoining houses in Snakes Lane West.

Redbridge Council refused planning permission for the revised plan, saying that the proposals by reason of their position, size, design and external appearance would be an intrusive development, out of scale and character with the prevailing pattern of development in the locality and would have a serious and adverse effect on the amenities enjoyed by occupants of neighbouring properties.

HELP REQUIRED: Could you assist the Lib Dem Focus team in its work. Please contact the editors
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