

BROMLEY LABOUR GROUP NEWS

NEWSLETTER OF THE LABOUR MEMBERS OF BROMLEY COUNCIL

**PENGE & CATOR WARD
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JANUARY/FEBRUARY 2011

TORY AND LIB DEM CUTS TARGET THE ELDERLY

At the time of going to press (late January), it is becoming clearer as to how exactly the Tory and Lib Dem cuts will impact on the people of the borough. Final details will be agreed at a meeting of the Full Council which will now be held on Monday 28th February. This is two weeks later than planned as there have been delays in setting a budget by the Mayor and GLA and also because the government were late in producing the Revenue Support Grant for authorities in December. The Tories and their Lib Dem friends are in effect trying to close day centres for the elderly in a roundabout way. They are currently consulting on proposals which will see older people who are classified as either in the critical/substantial bracket being charged up to £18 a day to attend a day centre or to charge £10 for those people who make their own way to the centre and are not classed as being in the critical/substantial category. Further details are available on the Bromley website – www.Bromley.gov.uk. The idea behind this is that people will have a personal budget to spend as they please in assisting them with day care and they can then opt in to using the day centres rather than the Council just providing the service. This is good in theory because it will give people more control over their own lives but in practice will make planning difficult for the centres themselves and will be a bureaucratic nightmare in terms of having to employ somebody to collect monies etc. Are staff expected to refuse entry to people who for whatever reason have not got money on them as they come through the door of the day centre? What happens if people choose to come to a centre one week and not the next? Obviously, the day centres will need to market themselves to encourage people to come in to their activities but many of the day centres do not have people with those kind of skills. This is in effect trying to close the day centres via the back door. A decision on this will be made by the Tory Portfolio Holder for Adult and Community Services; Graham Arthur on March 18th. Consultation is due to finish on this proposal at the end of February.

CHILDRENS CENTRES TO CLOSE THANKS TO THE TORIES/LIB DEMS

Bromley Tories are looking at closing 10 of the children and family centres in the borough which have assisted parents in helping them to bond with their children and address issues of concern. Biggin Hill, Burnt Ash, Castlecombe, Churchfields, Cotmandene, Elmers End, James Dixon, Manor Oak, Mottingham, Poverest, Princes Plain and Widmore are all under threat as they look to make savings of £600,000 next year and £2.8 million in 2012-13. The proposal is to just have three centres in total with 2 in areas of deprivation plus one borough-wide centre for children with disabilities. No final decisions have been made but the expectation is that only Community Vision in Penge and the Blenheim Centre in Orpington will survive. What will happen to the remaining centres? Will they be given to the adjacent schools to run or to use? Will they have the budget to make use of them? Surestart Centres were set up by the Labour government to address child poverty issues. Never has the phrase “we are all in this together” rung more hollow.

BIGGIN HILL AIRPORT CONSULTATION

Consultation is currently taking place on a proposal from Biggin Hill Airport to vary the operating hours during the Olympics next year. Bromley Council has an interest as the freeholder with Biggin Hill Airport Limited (BHAL), the tenant. BHAL need the permission of the council to change operating hours and other issues which are outlined in the lease and operating schedules. BHAL want to temporarily extend operating hours by an hour on weekdays so that the hours would be 0630 to 2300. The proposed weekend hours would be from 0630 to 2300 changing from the existing 0900 to 2000 hours. The temporary period covers both the Olympics and the Paralympics and time for travel before and after these events. More details are on the Bromley website but views as to whether this proposal should go ahead should be sent in by Friday 18th February.

CRYSTAL PALACE FOOTBALL CLUB TO MOVE BACK TO BROMLEY?

As you may have read in the national/local press, there is a proposal that Crystal Palace Football Club relocate from their current home at Selhurst Park in South Norwood to the National Sports Centre at Crystal Palace Park which is where they played at the start of the last century and was also briefly the home of the FA Cup Final. The proposal is for a 40,000 capacity stadium which could be built by 2015. The current athletics arena holds around 17,000 spectators but is currently only used a couple of times a year to its full potential. At the time of going to press, the situation is complicated further by the proposals for the Olympics site itself with both West Ham and Tottenham vying to use it and Tottenham offering to pay for a new athletics venue at Crystal Palace. A decision has been put back on this announcement. Could the new proposed stadium in South London incorporate both football and athletics? Thus far, there seems very little opposition to the Crystal Palace Football Club proposal in Croydon and amongst the fans and of course, it would strengthen the case for increased public transport/the tram extension and regeneration money in the area. Are you listening Boris Johnson?

GRAPE AND GRAIN PUB IN CRYSTAL PALACE GIVEN CINEMA CONSENT

A proposal to turn the Grape and Grain pub on the corner of Anerley Hill and Church Road into a 2 screen cinema with 254 seats/bar was granted planning consent in mid January. The adjacent car showroom which has been used recently for exhibiting artwork forms part of the application. We asked for the application to be deferred because we were concerned about possible parking/traffic issues but traffic engineers were comfortable with the proposal. Lib Dem councillors for the ward did not bother to attend or give comments to the meeting. There has been a community campaign to turn the former bingo hall further along Church Road into a cinema after proposals for a church on the site were rejected in December 2009 due to concerns about parking issues.

COUNCILLOR RON STOCKBRIDGE

We were sorry to learn of the passing of Councillor Ron Stockbridge who served for virtually 40 years on Lewisham Council. He was briefly the leader of the council in 1984-5. A by election is expected to be held in Bellingham ward in March. It was good to see that Labour held onto a marginal council seat in Ladywell in Lewisham last November.

CONTACTING BROMLEY LABOUR GROUP

We are always happy to take up issues that you raise with us and to keep the Tories and their friends, the Lib Dems, in Bromley in check. One of the best ways of doing that is on e mail or through the council website – www.Bromley.gov.uk You can contact councillors by using the same format e.g., Peter.Fookes@Bromley.gov.uk This is the same for members and officers of the authority as well. We also have our own website which can be accessed at www.pengeandcatorcouncillors.co.uk and is regularly updated almost daily by John Getgood. This site can't be accessed currently but it will be back in action very shortly. You can also write to us c/o Bromley Civic Centre, Stockwell Close, Bromley BR1 3UH or leave a message on our answer phone 020 8460 0626.