

COUNCIL MEETING

WEDNESDAY 15TH JULY 2009

DEPUTATIONS AND PETITIONS

AGENDA ITEM NO. 5

**REPORT OF THE SERVICE HEAD,
DEMOCRATIC SERVICES**

SUMMARY

1. The Council's constitution provides that a maximum of six deputations and petitions are received at any meeting. These are taken in the order of receipt. This report sets out the deputations and petitions so far submitted by members of the public for presentation at Council on Wednesday 15th July 2009.
2. The deadline for receipt of deputations and petitions for this meeting is noon on Thursday 9th July. Details of any further deputations or petitions received before the deadline will be tabled at the meeting.
3. In each case the members of the deputation/petitioners may address the meeting for no more than three minutes. Members may then question the deputation/petitioners for a further three minutes. The relevant Lead Member or Chair of Committee may then respond to the deputation or petition for up to three minutes.
4. Any outstanding issues will be referred to the relevant Corporate Director for attention who will respond to those outstanding issues in writing within 28 days.
5. Members should confine their contributions to questions and answers and not make statements or attempt to debate.

5.1 DEPUTATIONS

One deputation has been received at the time of printing as set out below:-

5.1.1 Deputation from Mr John Budis, Tower Hamlets College and others against proposed cuts at Tower Hamlets College:

“We would like to have a deputation to present our arguments against the proposed cuts at Tower Hamlets College.

These cuts in provision will have a negative impact on the local community. The Council becomes responsible for much of ESOL provision soon. We feel that there has been no opportunity for the college unions (UCU and UNISON) to discuss the impact of the current shortfall in funding that is having a drastic effect on the lower levels of provision: E1 and E2.

We are also concerned about the loss of jobs and the fact that our management will not consider proposals that can avert redundancies. One example is their failure to liaise with the Council over provision of ESOL in the borough. We have many years of expertise in delivering ESOL and could save the Council money by offering some of our experienced ESOL tutors to deliver on LLL provision for the three posts that you currently need.

We also wish to support the Respect motion about cuts in Adult Education being put to the full Council meeting on 15th July. This motion will support the EDM 1656: Educational Provision in Tower Hamlets.”

5.2 PETITIONS

Three petitions have been received as set out below:-

5.2.1 Petition from Ms Joanna Kaschke and others regarding the Glasshouse Community Centre:

“I am not clear why Tower Hamlets Council does not support positive community initiatives like the Glasshouse Community Centre. This community centre on Parkview Estate, does not attract nor host crime and provides a positive to the anti-social and criminal negatives in the area. There was a lengthy article in the East London Advertiser about the issue too.

Talking of publications, the Council can spend well over 1 million pounds per year on East End Life but cannot find a comparatively paltry sum of £6,000 for a local community centre. Such centres are important to provide

meeting space for locals who cannot afford commercial rates to mix and there is still a considerable number of local residents who require that provision.

People use it for birthday parties, children's parties, weddings, and other parties.

There is also a much used boxing club, tea and coffee mornings, I use it for Neighbourhood Watch meetings and of course the Tenants and Residents Association also meets there. Not to forget the mothers and toddlers and youth club have nowhere else to go on a regular basis. I thought the council cares a lot for under-fives but apparently Bethnal Green North is not high on the agenda for them. Apparently Central Government funding has already been allocated to be spent in the area and approved by the Parkview TRA and when the children's play area of the Glasshouse will be upgraded, the glasshouse Centre itself must be running smoothly and for that purpose it does need its grant.

Especially in my function as chair of the Parkview Neighbourhood Watch I am concerned that crime fighting and preventing has not just to do with arresting criminals, it is as much about crime prevention and a well run and loved community center like the Glasshouse is an invaluable asset for that purpose. It attracts and retains law abiding citizens, children and pensioners who need a meeting space.

Jackie Miller and her mother Lil Warner ran the Glasshouse for over 18 years, my own children attended summer school there. And just because Lil Warner died of a sudden heart attack that took her unexpectedly from our midst the Council decides to turn onto the volunteers leaving them with unpaid bills. Jackie Miller is personally responsible for those bills and she had a justified expectation to get her grant to pay for those gas bills that have accumulated during last winter, a winter that saw exceptionally low temperatures and the allocation of cold weather payments to benefit recipients and old people.

The Glasshouse does a lot of good in our community and deserves support from the Council to keep as an invaluable asset for our community. It is not the action of a responsible council to allow the use of a community centre without ensuring that the cost of doing so can be met and the Council did exactly that, namely allow the use of the Glasshouse without checks on viability.

I am therefore hoping that the Council will change its mind and now allocate the £6,000 – 10,000 asked for and would also consider paying for a permanent worker to run the Glasshouse centre to enable a more efficient allocation of this resource for community education as well as entertainment. The Glasshouse also requires renovation and has further potential as local Sure Start centre, education centre and community meeting venue and prayer facilities for Muslims.

I am still hoping the Council will now give the much needed money to help the volunteers pay back £3,500 on unpaid gas and electric bills as well as sufficient monies for the running of the centre.

I thank you for your considering in the hope that you will grant this request.”

5.2.2 Petition from Mrs Gloria Thienel and others regarding Stebondale Street:

“We, the undersigned, want Stebondale Street to be fully repaired and resurfaced. We are concerned about the poor state of the road and the dangerous dips and bumps which are causing damage to our cars.”

5.2.3 Petition from the parents of Halley Primary School pupils opposing the re-opening of the Perfect Fried Chicken on the corner of Ben Jonson Road and Aston Street, E1:

“We, the parents of Halley Primary School, would like to register our concerns with the Council about the re-opening of the Perfect Fried Chicken on the corner of Ben Jonson Road and Aston Street, Stepney, London, E1.

Since the PFC closed on the 2nd of March 2009, we have notice a significant change in the area. There is a huge decrease in the gangs of youths hanging around the shop area, fights, drinking and display of anti-social behaviour. We now feel much safer and comfortable walking past this particular area.

We are not happy about the location of the shop which is right next to the school; the area around the shop was always filled with litter and the smell was very strong. Since it closed, however, there has been an improvement. We also noticed that our children are less interested in fast food. As parents of this community we would like to oppose the shop opening as a Fast Food shop as we would like to improve the health and well-being of our children particularly as Tower Hamlets is said to have the highest rate of obesity and other life threatening illnesses.”