

LONDON BOROUGH OF TOWER HAMLETS

COUNCIL MEETING

WEDNESDAY 23rd JANUARY 2013

PETITIONS

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

SUMMARY

1. The Council's Constitution provides for up to three petitions to be received at each Council Meeting. These are taken in order of receipt. This report sets out the valid petitions submitted for presentation at the Council meeting on Wednesday 23rd January 2013.
2. The deadline for receipt of petitions for this meeting is noon on Thursday 17th January. However, at the time of agenda despatch the maximum number of petitions has already been received as set out overleaf.
3. In each case the petitioners may address the meeting for no more than three minutes. Members may then question the petitioners for a further four minutes. Finally, the relevant Cabinet Member or Chair of Committee may respond to the 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 Please help save precious public open space in Spitalfields (Petition from Ms Christine Whaite and Spitalfields Open Space)

The Church of England and London Borough of Tower Hamlets have given permission for the local primary school to build in the churchyard right next to Hawksmoor's famous Christ Church Spitalfields. This is in spite of some 350 letters of objection including from those with expert knowledge.

This means that public open space in the churchyard is being reduced by more than 60%: from about 4,000 sqm to around 1,500 sqm.

The disused burial ground, including the school playground, has been and still is protected and held on charitable trust by LBTH, who must manage and control the burial ground to allow the enjoyment by the public of the open space.

There is no need to build in the churchyard so close to one of the finest baroque churches in Europe. There are suitable alternatives for any development that the church and school might require. To build on this site is cultural and environmental vandalism.

Spitalfields is in the most densely populated area of London. Public green space here is already very scarce indeed.

Scientific research demonstrates that lack of green space adversely affects physical and mental health and wellbeing of children and adults alike.

Green space is vital in balancing the effect of climate change in the inner city, where temperatures average 6 degrees C higher than outside.

The churchyard is the setting for Christ Church Spitalfields, Hawksmoor's Grade 1 Listed Designated Heritage Asset (as defined by the Government's Planning Policy Statement 5) on which £10 million has recently been spent. The churchyard itself is a Heritage Asset, and a crucial part of the Significance of Christ Church Spitalfields.

Help save this precious green space NOW or lose it forever.

5.2 Local Government Boundary Review petitions:-

(i) From Save Banglatown Campaign:

We, the undersigned are horrified to learn about the Conservative Party proposal to abolish the historic and cultural hub of the Bangladeshi community from the new ward map of Tower Hamlets.

Generations of the Bangladeshi community have historically settled and started businesses in the Brick Lane and Banglatown area contributing significantly to the British economy, including the curry industry.

This proposal is a smack in the face for thousands of Bangladeshis and non-Bangladeshis who have struggled and sacrificed to have Banglatown recognised in the map of Tower Hamlets.

We call on the Mayor to take our concerns with the Boundary Commission and support our campaign to have Banglatown reinstated to Spitalfields & Banglatown ward.

(ii) From Save East India & Lansbury Ward Campaign:

We, the undersigned are horrified to learn about the Conservative Party's proposal to abolish "East India and Lansbury Ward" from the new ward map of Tower Hamlets.

We call on Lutfur Rahman, Mayor of Tower Hamlets, to take our concerns with the Boundary Commission and support our campaign to have "East India and Lansbury" reinstated.

5.3 Rich Mix (Petition from Mr Mohammed Nurul Hoque and others).

We, the undersigned local residents of Weavers Ward, are concerned about the whereabouts of the £850,000 'soft loan' that was given to support the Rich Mix Centre.

Despite having this valuable local facility on our doorsteps, we feel that vast majority of the centre's users are from outside of Tower Hamlets.

We call on the Mayor to investigate and update us on the efforts the Council has made to recoup this fund, especially at a time when many Tower Hamlets residents are struggling financially under the current economic climate.