

Shadow Trust Board article Summer 2015

Assertion	Reality
<p>"Now we know. Lambeth...proposes no longer providing a service at Carnegie...[The Shadow Trust Board] always envisaged a Lambeth [library] service in the building."</p>	<p>The Shadow Trust Board's plan was always that Lambeth would stop receiving rent on parts of the building not used for library purposes and would pay rent on the library thereby increasing the yearly cost of the library from £120,000 to £310,000. They must always have known that Lambeth would never pay that increase of more than 150%.</p>
<p>The Friends' campaign for funding to be continued will lose the library.</p>	<p>Losing the funding would inevitably result in closure of the library.</p>
<p>The Board or its architects have published suggestions for community uses to replace the current library-based group and individual activities. (In the context of use as a Community Hub, with no mention of commercial lettings: "Our Architects' options for a mix of new uses were exhibited and consulted on.")</p>	<p>Despite having years to do so and setting up working groups for this purpose the Board have yet to come up with even a single suggestion for future community use. The architects also did not propose any community uses. They merely produced plans of the building with some areas labelled "Trust" to indicate that those might be used for community purposes or as administrative offices.</p>
<p>The Board have proposed major refurbishment of the building.</p>	<p>They have not. The Friends have proposed major refurbishment during the next decade or so. The building is well-suited to its current uses by the community and commercial tenants but the Board have instead proposed major alterations to the structure of the building. These proposed alterations would not provide significantly more community space or rental income.</p>

<p>"It costs £200,000 a year to run the building...as a library."</p>	<p>It costs £200,000 a year to run the building but the building is partly used for borough-wide services and partly is let out on commercial leases. There are plans by Lambeth to replace the borough-wide uses with further commercial lettings. This would reduce the net cost to £120,000 on the Friends' figures, derived from rents currently being paid, or less than £100,000 on the Board's figures.</p>
<p>The library has around 2,500 users.</p>	<p>At 31st May there were 3,082 Lambeth library cards issued through the Carnegie. Some users have cards issued through other Lambeth libraries, including libraries threatened with partial or complete closure. Other users do not have cards. At 31st March visits to the library were running at 8,358 a month.</p>
<p>The Friends' plans were announced at the AGM "without any debate."</p>	<p>Over 80 members attended the AGM. Proposals were discussed at length and the committee are now proceeding in accordance with the almost unanimous consensus reached at the meeting.</p>
<p>Lambeth informed the Friends that the Carnegie would have been added to the list of libraries to be closed if the Board did not exist.</p>	<p>No such information has ever been received by the Friends. As above indicated, the proposal to close the library was necessarily implied by the Board's plan for an exorbitant increase in its cost.</p>
<p>The Friends propose transferring the building to a Friends' user group.</p>	<p>The Friends' proposal is that the building always remain under democratic control, that is, it should continue to be owned by the Council or, if</p>

	<p>there is to be a transfer, this should be to a body in which all the groups using the building regularly have an equal say.</p>
<p>Carol Boucher wrote her article as one of the Friends.</p>	<p>Carol wrote her article as a member of the Shadow Trust Board. Membership of the Board is by invitation only and all eight members can speak on its behalf. In contrast, membership of the Friends is open to anyone who says they support our aims and pays the minimum subscription of £1. Only elected officers and committee members are entitled to speak on the Friends' behalf and Carol is not one of these.</p>
<p>The group Carol Boucher chairs is the Carnegie Herne Hill Shadow Trust Board.</p>	<p>"Board" connotes a body that has been officially appointed. The Board is a group of eight individuals who appointed themselves. They do not represent any local organisation. Despite at least five of the eight being Labour activists they do not even represent the Herne Hill Ward Labour Party.</p>
<p>Many of the users do not live in Lambeth.</p>	<p>The Board's complaint is that some Southwark residents use Carnegie Library. All the London boroughs have reciprocal arrangements to allow each others' residents to use the boroughs' libraries. According to the Lambeth Libraries Commission, which reported in 2011, Herne Hill is the only area of Lambeth adjoining another borough where Lambeth residents make significant use of a Lambeth library. In all other such areas Lambeth residents rely on</p>

	libraries in Southwark or other neighbouring boroughs.
The Board propose transferring the building to independently appointed trustees.	The trustees would not be accountable to the Council, users of the building or anyone else. Unwrapped, the proposal is to end all democratic control over the building.
The Friends can bid for funding to pay staff and rent.	Lambeth's proposals for an "endowment fund" do not include paying staff or rent.

30.7.15

Stephen Carlill