

From the Leader of the Council

Our Ref: **Leader/2016-05/15**

Tuesday 24th May

Colin Wight
Chair, The Herne Hill Society
PO Box 27845,
London
SE24 9AX



Dear Colin,

Thank you for your recent letter to me on behalf of the Herne Hill Society and apologies for the delay in replying to you.

I appreciate that there has been some concern about our plans for Carnegie but I hope our recent updates have reassured residents that the library service at Carnegie will reopen next year, as part of a wider community use of the building. Making changes to services that people value is always very difficult – but our financial challenge means that we do have to make these changes. Nevertheless, I am confident that by having a gym in the basement and expanding the range of community use in the building, residents in Herne Hill will have a community building that is both sustainable and open to all.

With regards to the basement, the Council has undertaken a structural survey and is confident that this work is deliverable. The Home Delivery Service will be relocated elsewhere and we believe that this is an appropriate use of space that allows the remainder of the building to be used for library and community use. Following the survey and our assessment, we believe that the building can be reopened in early 2017 as we have said.

Despite the challenges we face, I am confident that this is a very positive outcome as it is keeping a library service open and available to the public, particularly when you consider the hundreds of libraries that have been forced to close across the country under this government. The campaign against our plans has been focused on 'Defending the Ten', despite the fact that that is what our plans are doing – defending access to library services in ten locations across Lambeth.

The debate comes down to how many professional librarians we can provide in four of those sites and we have always been clear that it is not possible to provide the same library service with a significant budget reduction and therefore there will be a change in staffing. However, Lambeth library staff will still be on hand for at least 12 hours a week, to run activities and refresh library stock in the reopened Carnegie. That means activities and support for users, as well as continued access for longer hours to books, study space and computers.

Unfortunately, there have been claims in some quarters that children will not be allowed into the Carnegie when it reopens – this is untrue. All staff in the library – whether librarians or not – will have full DBS checks to ensure the safety and wellbeing of any young person using the

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library service. As always, we would encourage parents or guardians to accompany young children when using public buildings.

In terms of the memorials, I was not aware of this issue so thank you for bringing it to my attention. Please be assured that we will of course take great care with the removal and storage of them and we will inform you of their planned location when these plans are in place.

The exhibition will take in June and will be an opportunity for residents to see the plans for the building and to comment on the future community use of it. More details will be sent out in due course and I would encourage residents who are interested to attend and hope that you and your committee will be able to attend as well.

I hope that addresses your concerns but please do contact me if you have any further questions on this issue.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Lib Peck". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly informal style.

Cllr Lib Peck
Leader of Lambeth Council