Decent pay, decent hours

Greens fight for living wage for council staff

The Camden Green Party has vowed to continue fighting for a “living wage” to be paid to all people working for Camden council, despite the refusal so far of other parties to allow a motion to provide for this to be considered.

For the second time, at January’s Full Council meeting, the Green motion was not called. Maya de Souza, the leader of the Green group on council, said: “The national minimum wage of £5.52 per hour – currently £7.45 an hour – has been calculated. That’s been worked out to provide a minimum acceptable standard of living for London workers.”

Camden Council has a few directly employed cleaners paid below £7.45, but the rest of the cleaning and other low-paid work has been contracted out to private companies. Maya said: “This leads to an appalling situation in which Camden Council pays contractors periodic uplifts in their contracts, but these increases are not being passed on to the workers, many of whom haven’t had a pay increase in years or continue to be paid the national minimum wage of £5.52 per hour.

“Research has shown that 96% of those on poverty wages are from Black and minority ethnic groups, or are female.”

Other councils in London have backed Green Party motions to introduce the London Living Wage for all of their workers: on Southwark Council the lone Green, Jenny Jones, successfully pushed the motion through, and in Lewisham the six-strong Green Party group won unanimous backing for its initiative.

Camden Green Party, in what was one of the most progressive boroughs in London, is urging the council to catch up as soon as possible.

The credit crunch: is the Green New Deal the answer?

A Camden Green Party “Green Forum” meeting is being held in the back room at the Dartmouth Arms, York Rise, NW5 1SP, on Thursday, 26 February at 7.30pm.

If you’re interested in the answers that the Green Party has to offer, come along and discuss the causes and possible solutions of the credit-fuelled financial crisis.

(These Dartmouth Arms is a 5-minute walk from Tufnell Park Tube.)

Are you fully registered to vote?

- All citizens of Britain, European Union and Commonwealth countries should register to vote. Citizens of other European countries will need to complete an additional registration to be able to vote in the British Euro election on June 4. Camden will be sending out forms to all of those currently on the electoral roll, but forms can be obtained and submitted until May. More at tinyurl.com/bmn9w9.
- Students can register to vote at both their home, and term time addresses, if in different areas.

Contact: Camden electoral services 0207-974 6000 camden.gov.uk/democracy

Keep OUR post office

The Green Party has expressed strong opposition to the Labour government’s plan to sell off 25% to 33% of Royal Mail to a private company.

Natalie Bennett, Green Party South Camden coordinator, said: “It was a tragedy for the local community when we lost the Crowndale Road post office, as well as three other branches in the North of the borough, but this is possible even worse. “It is astonishing that given the dreadful state of the banking industry that anyone should still think that this ideology that ‘the private sector has the answers’ still has any currency at all.”

She noted that the current pension fund debt, which may deter potential investors, would first be taken on by the government – one more case of an attempt to hand profits to private companies while keeping costs and risks with the government.

Air pollution is a deadly problem

The cold weather in December has shown how air pollution, particularly of dangerous particulate pollution, is a problem that has not been adequately tackled. In Camden legal limits were exceeded for many days in December, and across Britain government targets were broken on 20 days for particle pollution, and on 22 days for nitrogen dioxide.

Jean Lambert, the Green Party MEP for London, said: “The tiny airborne particles (PM10) can cause and irritate conditions such as asthma, cardiovascular disease, lung cancer and lead to premature death. In London it is estimated that over 1,000 people die prematurely each year as a result of poor air quality and a further 1,000 are admitted to hospital.”

Green Party: the courage to change

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Crisis in provision for victims of rape

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Since Jenny made those com- ments, it has further emerged that even the one existing centre serving London, in Croydon, is struggling with a lack of certain- 

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