

Keep Highgate Green!

Highgate's Green Party Newsletter

April 2010



Whittington For Better or For Worse: The Changing Face of the NHS

By Naomi Aptowitzer

Five hospitals in north and central London – including the Whittington and Royal Free – have been told they will lose £900 million over the next five years. They propose to downgrade hospitals and move 60 per cent of emergency treatments to GP-run health centres otherwise known as polyclinics.

Under the plans, approximately 150,000 patients who pass through the Whittington's A&E would have to travel to the Royal Free in Hampstead, University College Hospital in Euston or the North Middlesex in Edmonton.

Islington NHS Chief Executive Rachel Tyndall said: "The amount of money available to the NHS is decided by the government. We are going to have less money to meet rising demands.

If the hospital continues as it is, then some other things get cut. There are difficult and hard decisions to be made. I have to balance the books."

Reducing the Whittington's A & E services will most impact on poorer and older patients, especially affecting those who live on the eastern side of what would be the catchment area.

These people may find them-

selves having to travel as far as 10 miles away with difficult access by public transport. But even for those who live locally, having to go to the Royal Free is a hardship especially as the public transport to the other side of the Heath is limited.

The Green Party firmly opposes these cuts and the policies that led to them. Hospitals have squandered money on expensive construction projects built with private finance (the Private Finance Initiative(PFI)) - which has meant lots of money for construction companies, financiers and expensive City lawyers.

Clearly the NHS cannot be left to use this system of financing projects – the risks are just too high. The Green Party publicly and consistently opposes the use of PFIs.

The Trust proposes to replace A & E services with polyclinics but we are concerned about the limited assessment of their impact and their costs.

The risks to patient care from reliance on polyclinics that operate in "waking hours" between 8am and 8pm have not been properly assessed.

The danger is that we will go down a route which may be less effective and even more expensive, forcing yet more cuts to be made.

Highgate Ward councillors and candidates are also very concerned about the limited efforts by the



Naomi Aptowitzer Highgate ward Green Party candidate

Trusts to fully engage residents in the difficult choices ahead of us.

We have written to the Trustees to ask them to put the facts on the table and engage the public. Highgate Green Party candidate **Naomi Aptowitzer** said;

"The Green Party is strongly against closure of A & E at

the Whittington – so many people have come forward in the area to say how their lives have been saved by easy access to this hospital. We oppose cuts to front line services.

"The hospital trusts need to engage in genuine discussion with residents to find a way forward".

They must be choking

Londoners have been breathing illegally polluted air for the last five years, with a failure to reduce particulate pollution below the European limit values.

That's not just some academic point. Between 3,000 and 6,000 Londoners are dying prematurely each year as a result, and the quality of life of us all is seriously affected particularly in areas where so many people are breathing concentrated fumes, fumes that they have done nothing to generate.

There's a particular concern for the young. The Green Party has been contacted by local groups and individuals concerned about the close proximity of vehicle exhaust pipes and the faces of children in strollers and walking the streets.

The impact of vehicles went much further, causing fear in pedestrians and leading many parents to keep their children close at hand when they might like to allow more independence. Highgate's Green Party councillors have been working to introduce 20mph zones on all but the most major routes in the borough, to help make our streets safer.

The continuing struggles that pedestrians are finding in some of the worst areas show that there is still an inappropriate balance between the needs of walkers and cyclists, and of motorised road users.

Camden Green Party has found many residents concerned about the problems that large coaches were creating on the streets. While by law, engines should be switched off when a coach is stationary for more than two minutes, many reported that this was not being adhered to.

Darren Johnson one of the Green Party London Assembly members said that "Over the last decade Londoners have suffered the consequences of complacency and inaction at all levels of government. Rather than taking urgent action to improve the health of Londoners. London needs a bold programme to reduce overall traffic levels and to ensure much cleaner buses and taxis on the streets of London."

Highgate ward moves back into St Pancras

Highgate ward is once again part of Holborn and St Pancras constituency.

Highgate was moved from Holborn and St Pancras North in 1983 to join with Hampstead. Now, in 2010, Highgate ward is back home in St Pancras.

The ward was once part of the ancient parish of St Pancras and the borough which built Highgate library: as it says on the foundation stone in Chester road, "the first public library in St Pancras". Highgate still has streets where the nameplates boldly proclaim in red gothic script:

Borough of St Pancras.

Green Councillors Working For You

Cllr Maya De Souza

It was an honour and pleasure for Adrian Oliver and I to be elected to Camden Council in May 2006, and to be joined by Alex Goodman in May 2008 as the first Green councillors in Camden. Alex and I have had strong connections with the area from our youth. Adrian had lived in the area for many years chairing Camden Green Party and running the Green Party office in Archway.

Of real importance to us are community organisations and movements. As part of this we:

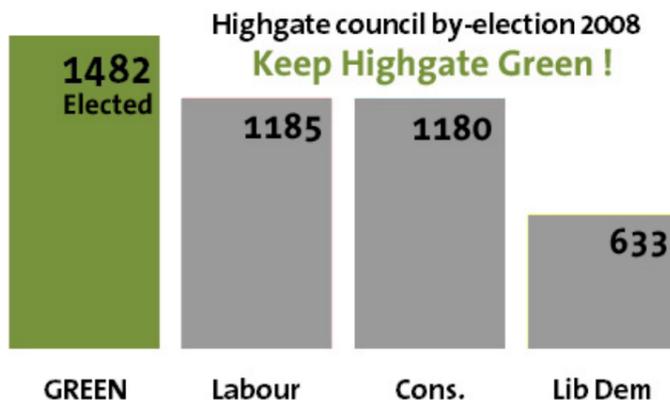
- made links with local organisations and arranged meetings with officers to establish new ways of working, allowing residents a real say in local decisions.

- arranged officer walkabouts: the improved road layout at the top of Highgate West Hill arose from this.

- worked with the Highgate Newtown Partnership which facilitates strong partnership working between community institutions.

- worked with residents and officers to set up Highgate Local Environment Action Forum.

There is much more than this snapshot and far more to do to make sure residents' voices are heard. The Green Party is committed to seeing the community at the centre of council decisions.



Camden Green Party: fair is worth fighting for

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Community needs its say on the Chester-Baltimore

As Highgate Newtown residents will now know, Camden's Executive decided last year to demolish and rebuild the Chester-Baltimore building, which lies between Chester Road, and Balmore Street.

Green ward councillors wanted to see renovation and a possible extension which would be good for the environment and avoid disruption. These buildings are a good example of successful 1970s architecture with nice sized airy apartments. **However, they have been allowed to deteriorate and are now in a poor state, looking tired and neglected,** with many vacant shops. There are also genuine issues about a semi-enclosed space which feels unsafe and external asbestos cladding. The Lib-Dem/Tory Executive has decided to proceed and obtained some Homes and Communities Agency funding.

As local ward councillors we sought to ensure that there is genuine consultation with residents.

Before we drew together a working group, with the assistance of residents, and demanded that the Council engages with this group, the level of engagement with residents was appalling. There was no consultation on the design brief, and officers putting it together did not even seem to know that there had been some consultation in early 2009

which needed to be taken on board. We will fight hard to ensure that the views of residents are heard.

It's most important that the new development has proper provision for shops and community facilities. Residents have made quite clear to us that **they value the benefits of small family-run businesses where the shop keepers know local people and provide a community service.**

It's important for the community that this area remains a hub where people bump into each other and get a chance to stop and chat. The original design had space for just one large 500sq m shop. To allow for independent shops there needs to be smaller premises on site. **The views of residents have been ignored.** We were shocked by this and by the fact that Lib Dems seemed to be making no effort to ensure we have such independent shops.

These buildings should be built to high environmental standards. This would ensure homes are warm and comfortable, with low energy bills. Modern technology helps us build homes which are so well insulated they hardly need any heating. This is what we'd like to see: not only good for the planet but for the health and comfort of residents. We're pushing for exciting new green buildings with high standards of comfort.

Meet your Highgate candidates



Cllr Maya De Souza

Maya has been a Highgate ward councillor for the last four years and feels passionately about ensuring residents get a fair deal: whether its affordable leaseholder service charges, or ensuring tenants get a good service on an estate in dealing with anti-social behaviour and repairs. She enjoys working with residents and community organisations and worked alongside others in establishing Highgate Climate Action Network, our local green Transition group and worked closely with many of the other excellent organisations in the area.



Tristan Smith

Tristan is an experienced Green campaigner, and a strong supporter of the NHS - his father having worked at Guy's Dental Hospital for 29 years. Tristan works for London's Green MEP, Jean Lambert, as her constituency casework assistant. Like Jean, he believes in a fair deal for everyone living in this city. Tristan is secretary to both the Camden Green Party and the London Federation of Green Parties.

Tristan graduated from the School of Oriental & African Studies in 2004, with a first class degree in social anthropology, and is currently reading law at the Open University. He contested the Cities of London & Westminster constituency at the last general election, and is the Green Party parliamentary candidate for Westminster North.



Naomi Aptowitzer

Naomi is the chair of her local residents' association and her work with the Council delivered the first recycling bins on any estate in Camden. Naomi runs a clean tech company ZiPee Bikes Ltd which produces low carbon forms of transport.

She campaigns for better cycling infrastructure and presses councils to install more on-street charge points for electric vehicles running on renewable energy. Naomi lives with her son and has a Masters in Communications from Brunel University. Her son's chronic asthma made her want to reduce air pollution and become actively involved with green issues.

Greens set out plans for Camden

Green Party councillors put forward constructive, innovative proposals for the Council's 2010/11 budget. These were rejected by the governing Lib Dem/Tory coalition.

A key proposal was to introduce a £5m/year scheme to **insulate 20,000 homes over 10 years.**

Green councillors proposed a pilot scheme for the new feed-in tariff for electricity, installing **photovoltaic panels on council buildings**, which should pay back their cost in 12 years. For both these schemes, our councillors

proposed ensuring **local workers** received training.

The Green Party continues to work to reinstate in full the **UK Online service** that has been cut first by Labour, then by the Lib Dem/Tory coalition. It provides internet access and training for older residents, and those who would otherwise be unable to bridge the "digital divide".

Green councillors want to ensure that everyone who works for Camden, including contractors, receives as a minimum the **London 'Living Wage', £7.60/hour.**

Our budget proposal would also have improved **cycling** provision, provided a grant of £200,000 for **youth facilities**, planted more **street trees** and installed more public **drinking fountains.**

Green Cllr Maya de Souza said: "The Liberal Democrats and Tories have been falling over themselves to claim 'credit' for freezing council tax, but residents understand you get what you pay for. The council provides many essential services, particularly to the most vulnerable. As inflation eats into council tax, they will suffer."



Get involved:

Camden Green Party is growing fast. We have three councillors in Highgate and in May 2010 we hope to gain more across the borough. Join (or help out) the only party that is ready for the future:

Email: camden@greenparty.org.uk
On the web: greenparty.org.uk
Our blog: camdengreenparty.wordpress.com
Follow us on Twitter: twitter.com/camdenGP

Call: 0780 171 9056

Get in touch if you'd like to help our campaign, put up a poster or make a donation.