

Cllrs must listen

IT IS depressingly predictable.

I refer to Cllr Fleming's comments on consultation about the development of the Twickenham riverside site in her letter to this paper last week, June 17.

On every possible occasion she repeats the mantra that 3,000 people were consulted.

This figure is made up of some 2,300 people who went to the pop-up shop and 700 who completed the consultation questionnaire.

What she does not say is that there was no opportunity for visitors to the shop to record their views in writing.

What we do know is that 82 per cent of the 700 people who filled in the formal consultation said they did not like the style and size of the proposed building.

This was a train crash for the council.

Their spin, however, is that somehow everyone who went to the shop loved it, despite there being no record of their views, and this overbalances the views of those who said in writing that they did not like it.

All I can say is that on the several occasions that I visited the shop I heard the vast majority of people saying how dreadful the scheme was.

We are now faced with a repeat performance.

There will be another consultation in July and another pop-up shop.

Unfortunately, it will be on the same unimaginative concept of a large block of flats and shops in a mock classical building which shuts off the town from the river.

There will probably be a few minor tweaks but Cllr Fleming is ploughing on with an already rejected concept.

She says the architects have included the main issues raised but they have not been allowed to include the basic issue that the buildings are not wanted.

She really is in denial and that denial is squandering a real opportunity to give Twickenham the town centre and focus that it has always needed.

For this new consultation to have any credibility it must include a mechanism which allows people to say yes or no to its elements in addition to making comments.

If views are sought in the pop-up shop people must be given the opportunity to complete the consultation then and there.

Sadly though, Cllr Fleming is not interested in consultation.

She is determined to push through her discredited and unimaginative scheme and is not listening to anyone.

Borough view



Petersham meadow: view of Richmond Hill with Petersham church above the trees by Andy Scott. Send your pictures to lettersrtt@london.newsquest.co.uk.

Merger under the spotlight

Twickenham deserves better:

COLIN HEATH
Eel Pie Island

Donations to the fair

THE Barnes Community Association is now collecting books, CDs, DVDs and PC/console games for the bookstall at the fair as well as bottles – anything from shampoo to Champagne – for the tombola.

For further details on how to donate or volunteer, visit www.barnes-ca.org/barnes-fair.

THE BARNES COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION

Scrutiny of merger

IT'S good to see that some of the pitfalls of Richmond and Wandsworth Councils merging services are getting a degree of scrutiny, specifically the thorny question of how the two councils would exit the planned fusion if desired by either council, as might happen with changes in political party control (Merger bid dilemma for councils, June 17).

Nothing in what we've been told so far, which is not a great deal, reassures me that this has all been thought through.

Tempting though the assumed savings would be, ranging from £7.3 million for the Shared Staffing Arrangement to a further £2.3 million for 'joint ventures', I have deep misgivings about the whole idea. It's never been clear to me how shared services would be effectively scrutinised on behalf of the public when the two councils are so different in culture and traditions going back to at least the 1980s. At a time of growing public disillusionment with politics of all kinds, we need proper and clear systems of accountability, both through the process of implementing the new system and then in the day-to-day running of the services.

Suppose Wandsworth wants to make cuts in services, as historically they often do, why should that impact on what I would want to see in my borough, Richmond, where different priorities have often prevailed?

There needs to be much more extensive public consultation on all this, with much more attention paid to the needs of democratic control and transparency.

GILES OAKLEY
Coval Road,
East Sheen

Isolation is never good

ON JUNE 23 my wife and I celebrated nine years of being married.

What I have learned more than anything is that if you work together through life's challenges (mental health problems, moving countries, dealing with a child with special needs, ill parents, to name but four), you get a better result for all.

I pray that the people of the UK realised that just as is the case with marriage or any relationship, isolating ourselves, putting up barriers and blaming everyone else for our problems solves nothing and in fact only makes things worse.

We simply cannot tackle the big current issues of the world like climate change, terrorism, inequality and refugees on our own.

Now is not the time to walk away.

CHRIS KEY
Ravensbourne Road,
St Margarets

The A316 won't cope

REGARDING the sale and development of Kneller Hall and its impact on the A316.

We travel on A316 daily so I ask: how on earth can the A316, Whitton Road, the Hospital Bridge roundabout and the Rugby Football Union roundabouts cope with the extra housing planned, and therefore extra cars?

The A316 has a tailback every day.

Rugby day traffic will be even worse, if that is even possible, with an extra 15,000 tenants.

Unbelievable.

ANNE
Rosebine Estate,
Twickenham

Listen to this

WITH Kingston announcing a new growth and development strategy, I hope you will be able to take the time to listen to this 8/9 minute video tape from last weekend's Radio 4 programme *A Point Of View* in which Roger Scruton's talk entitled *How should we build?* says exactly what I and the vast majority of the population would say, only so much better!

It would save so many people so much time and effort in futile attempts to have our views actually taken notice of, if it were to be played at all council meetings and acted upon.

There would be no more need for expensive public meetings, public anger and

frustration, and our Great Britain would become the place we all want it to be. The video can be found at bbc.in/1POYJsJ.

CHRISTINE ARNOLD
by email

Rocking & strolling

WHEN the sun chooses to shine on our beautiful borough, it is the perfect excuse to get out and enjoy the royal parks and green spaces on our doorstep. I enjoyed a stunning walk on Sunday, from Wimbledon Park to Richmond Bridge. A seven-mile section of the Capital Ring walk, it goes through Wimbledon Common, taking in the lake, before heading towards the lovely Richmond Park and Petersham Meadows. When the weather is kind to you, the walk takes in some of our borough's most stunning views. Richmond Park is excellently maintained and looked after and the number of families, cyclists and walkers enjoying the green space last weekend is credit to how hard they work.

Whether you can manage a trek of seven miles or not, show your appreciation for our unique environment by voting with your feet on the next sunny day in Richmond.

ALED TAYLOR
By email