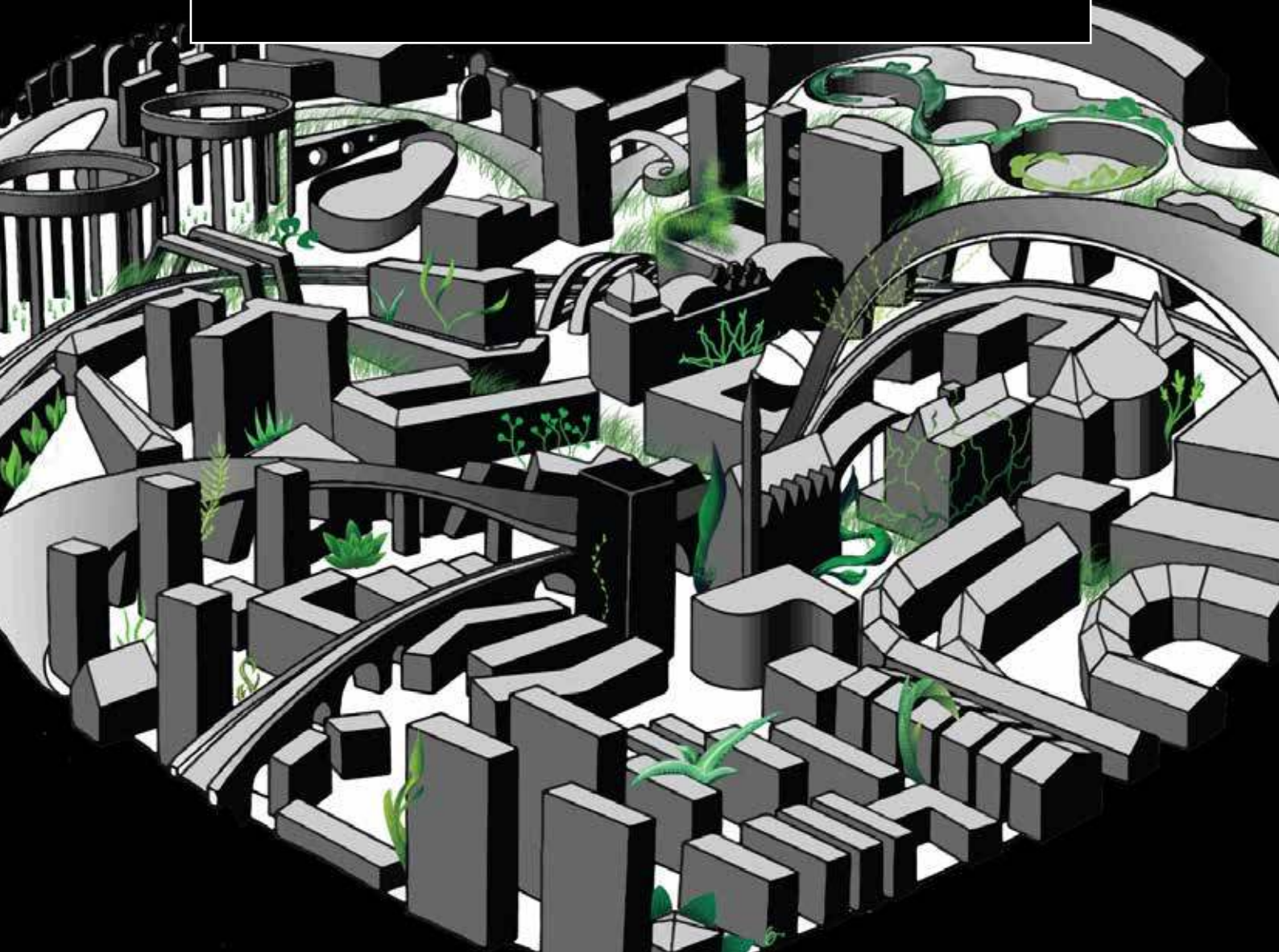


WRITINGS FROM THE ROOTS OF NORTH KENSINGTON



**FEATURING:
WESTWAY23
FRIENDS OF NORTH KENSINGTON LIBRARY
SAVE WORNINGTON COLLEGE
GRENFELL ACTION GROUP
THINK
URBAN DANDY
FAILED BY THE STATE
SHAREEFA ENERGY**

2019

Writings from the Roots of
North Kensington

The work of North Kensington
grassroots community writers,
campaigners, film makers
and artists. BG and AG
(Before Grenfell and After Grenfell)

COVER/BACK COVER
NORTH KENSINGTON HEALING

Toby Laurent Belson's artwork and words look at the response to the Grenfell Tower Fire and how the response follows a powerful cultural legacy that permeates North Kensington. An international culture with roots in disaster recovery, self determination and the true ideal of democracy....

PAGE 4 / 5
GRENFELL ACTION GROUP

we start with a famous blog that foretold a terrible thing. We present titles and introductions from the GAG archives of June 2015 and June 2016. Two examples of a never-to-be-forgotten month showing how connected GAG was to the concerns of North Kensington, RBKC and beyond....

PAGE 6 / 7
URBAN DANDY

we continue with a blog that regularly gives us a valuable insight into the way our authorities work, with an article on Canalside House, and an area that will soon be a space of huge upheaval and development....

PAGE 8 / 9
THINK

our final blog is an exclusive. This Is North Kensington have been providing the local community with a sometimes daily take on the shenanigans of the local authority. All done in a tongue in cheek style with critical bite....

PAGE 10 / 11 / 12 / 13

WESTWAY23

when the Westway23 campaign came together in early 2015, it seemed to spark something back into life in North Kensington, proving to be a catalyst for multiple groups and campaigns to hold power to account through creative collective struggle. See one of the roads to change on this Westway23 Timeline.....

PAGE 14 / 15

SAVE WORNINGTON COLLEGE

had our community not suffered the deplorable tragedy of June 2017, we may never have known with such complete certainty the corrupted behaviour that brought a local treasure to its knees. But, we did suffer and we do know.....

PAGE 16 / 17

FRIENDS OF NORTH KENSINGTON LIBRARY

North Kensington Library was the very first concession made to the local community in light of the Grenfell Tower fire. Before that, the campaign did everything to engage with the RBKC leadership and was a perfect example of the damaging deficit in local democracy.....

PAGE 18 / 19

FAILED BY THE STATE

countless things have been written and produced about North Kensington. This film was made with the local agenda at its heart, produced by young people with an intent to empower the local community and put forward the truth of how we live.....

ALL OVER

SHAREEFA ENERGY

this collection of writings offer a glimpse of the strength within the local community, despite huge pressures which continue to exert themselves here and all over. A young local artist puts that pressure into words we can feel.....

**CLASH OF THE TRAUMATISED
COMMUNITIES INFILTRATED
POISONED**



Monthly Archives:

June 2015



Full articles can be read on the GAG website:
www.grenfellactiongroup.wordpress.com

WESTWAY23 FUNDAY & DAY OF ACTION

Posted on June 29, 2015 by grenfellactiongroup

On Sunday 5th July Westway23 are hosting a creative demonstration of community in various areas along the 23 acres under the Westway – A40(M) in LADBROKE GROVE – an enormous area left to the local community 44 years ago as ...

GRENFELL TOWER – Propaganda, Lies and Fact

Posted on June 25, 2015 by grenfellactiongroup

It has come to the attention of residents Of Grenfell Tower that our local elected Councillors are misrepresenting what is actually happening to tenants and leaseholders as a result of the Grenfell Tower Improvement Works. Councillor Blakeman, in a recent ...

RUMBLES OF DISCONTENT AT LANCASTER WEST

Posted on June 24, 2015 by grenfellactiongroup

Following a recent attempted break-in at one of the homes in Grenfell Tower the 'official' notice below was posted by staff acting on the orders of the TMO Neighbourhood Manager Siobhan Rumble: It is unfortunate that Ms Rumble's warning not ...

Hornton Street Calls Again! Save Earl's Court.

Posted on June 22, 2015 by grenfellactiongroup

The Earl's Court Area Action Group have called for a PEACEFUL PROTEST to HALT demolition of EARLS COURT ONE AND TWO on public health grounds. Wednesday, 24th June 2015. Assemble 6pm SHARP outside RBKC Town Hall, Hornton Street, London W8 ...

Last Sweets Way Family Needs Your Support!

Posted on June 20, 2015 by grenfellactiongroup

The Grenfell Action Group invite our readers to support this important ACTION CALLOUT: Stand with the last Sweets Way family! COURTROOM SOLIDARITY NEEDED! Where: County Court at Royal Courts of Justice, Thomas More Building, The Strand, WC2A 2LL When: Monday, June ...

Feilding-Mellen – RBKC's Social Cleansing Hitman

Posted on June 18, 2015 by grenfellactiongroup

In early May 2015, the Grenfell Action Group published a blog that explained how the noose of regeneration is tightening around the necks of those living in social housing in North Kensington: <https://grenfellactiongroup.wordpress.com/2015/05/10/the-noose-of-regeneration-tightens-around-lancaster-west/> It is the our conviction that RBKC ...

AN UNFATHOMABLE DESTRUCTION

Feilding-Mellen Bang To Rights? – Not Just Yet!

Posted on June 29, 2016 by grenfellactiongroup

On 18th May the Grenfell Action Group published a blog that drew attention to Rock Feilding-Mellen's apparent conflict of interest with regard to Notting Hill Prep School, evidenced by the fact that the children of the RBKC Cabinet Member for ...

March For North Kensington Library

Posted on June 26, 2016 by grenfellactiongroup

PLEASE COME AND JOIN THIS IMPORTANT COMMUNITY ACTION AND SHOW RBKC COUNCIL THAT NORTH KENSINGTON RESIDENTS WILL NOT SURRENDER OUR TREASURED PUBLIC RESOURCES WITHOUT A FIGHT! <https://www.facebook.com/events/1050055945074359/> <https://www.facebook.com/groups/1133476120030611/> <https://www.facebook.com/pages/North-Kensington-Library/161471517199874>

RBKC Cover-up at Grenfell Tower

Posted on June 19, 2016 by grenfellactiongroup

It is a sad fact that because of the socio-political demographic of the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea, the Conservative group is all but guaranteed a massive majority on the Council. For many years they have served continuously as the administration ...

AXE THE ACT DEMO

Posted on June 16, 2016 by grenfellactiongroup

<https://www.facebook.com/Kill-the-Housing-Bill-secure-homes-for-all-1535565046764103/>

UCL RENT STRIKE MASS MOBILISATION!

Posted on June 16, 2016 by grenfellactiongroup

SATURDAY 18th JUNE, 1PM Meet on Torrington Square outside Birkbeck ready to have fun...bring music + banners! flares + friends! – Over 1000 students are on rent strike for a fairer future at UCL and the stakes have never been ...

Wornington College Threat Confirmed

Posted on June 12, 2016 by grenfellactiongroup

Since our recent post warning of a possible threat to the future of the Kensington and Chelsea College at Wornington Road (Crisis – is Kensington and Chelsea College Under Threat?) we have acquired additional information confirming that there is indeed ...



^^^

Full articles can be read on the GAG website:
www.grenfellactiongroup.wordpress.com

Monthly Archives:

June 2016

CONSTANT GNAWING AT THE ROOTS FAT CATS LURK PROMPTED WITH CLUES TO SPREAD VERMIN

URBAN DANDY

www.urbandandy london.com



Canalside: Curiouser and Curiouser

DECEMBER 7, 2018 ~ URBAN DANDY LONDON

Rumours of Canalside House's demise have been greatly exaggerated. By the building's owner, Kensington and Chelsea council...

Latest News

At the December 3rd Housing and Property Scrutiny Committee meeting at Kensington Town Hall, RBKC planning officers stated that the "demolition" of Canalside House that Conservative councillors had been pushing for is not necessary.

The admission at the scrutiny committee came less than a week after planning officers from the Kensal-Canalside Opportunity Area Delivery Team visited Canalside residents, informing them that the building "does not need to go to deliver the site" and "we basically do not need to demolish the site".

This was news to the 14 resident organisations, who had been told in September by deputy leader of the council, Kim Taylor-Smith, that "part or all of the building will require demolition" to "maximise the density on the Kensal Gas Works development".

Autopilot

Taylor-Smith's was the council's third attempt in recent history to remove the mix of charities, CICs and other third sector groups from the community hub. In 2016 RBKC told residents that they would be moving to a building on Latimer Road, judged by the Canalside organisations to be "wholly inappropriate". Only the Grenfell Tower fire and its political fallout prevented the forced relocation. In January this year the council set its sights on Canalside again, but residents and activists fought off the attempt to sell the building and turn it into private flats.

DISTURB THE LOCALS

TRIGGER THEM

POKE AND LEER

“Despite all the cynicism that the council has aroused, it has the chance to use canalside house to come good on its promise of “change””

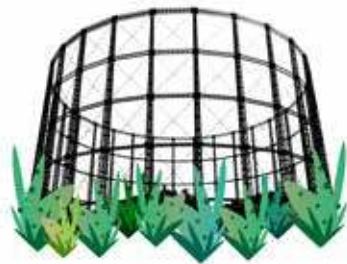
The fact that Canalside need not be demolished had apparently been known to planners for months, following surveys of the area. The planning officers expressed frustration that senior councillors had failed to communicate this to Canalside residents, who were left with uncertainty about their ability to deliver their services in the medium and long terms.

This third u-turn by RBKC raises questions about whether senior Conservative councillors are taking care to equip themselves with facts before pursuing actions on autopilot that would have a profound affect on North Kensington. In creating uncertainty and insecurity around one of the area’s few remaining community spaces, the council has done nothing to change its reputation for being on the side of property speculators at the expense of the local population.

New Ward

Despite all the cynicism that the council has aroused, it has the chance to use Canalside House to come good on its promise of “change”. The development will transform the site, effectively creating “a new council ward” as one councillor put it. The Mayor of London’s website states that redeveloping Kensal-Canalside has the potential to create 2,000 jobs and a minimum of 3,500 new homes.

At their meeting with the residents, planning officers outlined two viable options: for the organisations to stay in an upgraded Canalside House or to move to a state-of-the-art building on the Gas Works development. Either option could ensure that diversity, history and culture are retained in the area. The residents are interested in exploring both. It remains to be seen whether or not the council will engage with them in earnest or if they will remain in the shadows before coming round for a fourth raid on Canalside.



STEP BACK AND WATCH HAUC UNRAVEL

PEOPLE CLAWING AT EACH OTHER

This Is North Kensington Exclusive



Time That RBKC Cleaned Up Its Act

This is Mary “Wheelie Bin” Weale. She is the RBKC Cabinet Member for Finance.

Back at October’s full council meeting last year (2018), our council voted to pay council workers the London Living Wage - good. But what wasn’t so good was that the ruling Conservatives on our council rejected an opposition motion to do this now.

Labour Cllr Pat Mason had said “The contractors told us that the contract had not been costed to include the wages. *If we really believe that our contract staff should be paid the London Living Wage then we should do it now*”.

Quite right - but then came Cllr Weale’s response in speaking to reject the amendment, making instead the council Leadership’s case for phasing this in, and rejecting the renegotiation of council contracts saying “we have to be mindful of the significant cost of doing this”.

Oh really? And just how are we the public, supposed to be aware of any significant costs of doing this when Wheelie Bin and her colleagues decline to give any figures? It appears these figures are not even given to the opposition councillors!

A real and serious issue that many here have found with this council is their complete lack of transparency and openness - which still exists today, nearly two years after Grenfell.

Another real issue many of us have is this council’s complete ignorance (which sometimes veers into contempt) towards people on low incomes. What, we ask, exactly is wrong with paying someone earning very little in the first place, a living wage to do the job?

DO THE DEVILS WORK THEY CAN'T SEE THEY ARE TOO TRAUMATISED



Mary Wheelie Bin advertises her holiday home (a luxury chateau) online - pictured above - people can apparently stay there for upwards of €400 per night. Weale, the daughter of a former Conservative MP and as someone with aristocratic descendants clearly lives in a different world from many of the council staff paid to do the real work here, but she could at least TRY to show some compassion. The nearest most ordinary council workers could get to a stay there would be to have a winning lottery ticket.....

Many residents from our local North Kensington community are concerned about legal fees over Grenfell and rightly outraged that our taxes will be going to pay legal defence fees. What Cllr Weale has also not publicly shared is that she is a distant relative by marriage to Rock Feilding-Mellen (she is the Great Granddaughter of the 11th Earl of Wemyss, Hugo Charteris - who was also Grandfather to Feilding-Mellen's Stepfather, Jamie Neidpath, the 13th Earl of Wemyss).

A distant relative only she might be, but Weale has not shared this information publicly and her failure to be transparent with regards to both public figures - the council's budget comes up next week - and her own potential legal conflicts of interest, does not bode well for anyone really hoping for a change of culture at RBKC.

Both Mary Weale (who has been an RBKC councillor for over 30 years) and Leader of the council, Elizabeth "Dizzy Lizzy" Campbell, served under the previous discredited organisation - as did present cabinet members Gerard Hargreaves, Catherine Faulks and Emma Will.

Some senior council officers with roles in the previous administration, including Richard Egan, director of corporate property services - who once arrogantly boasted that RBKC has "more money than the banks" - are still in their posts.

If this council is really serious about changing, we suggest that it is time to do some spring cleaning and make some real change of directions with regard to policy. This means letting go of senior councillors and staff - the same people involved will just run the same old show. Some of these people had real involvement in the sell-offs and dealings in the background before Grenfell, including Wornington College, North Kensington Library, Kensington Odeon, Marlborough School, and the Westway Trust.

RBKC will never regain the trust of many local residents, particularly in the north of the Borough if they do not clean up their act - Grenfell has left an indelible stain on the face of this authority.

Westway23 was formed in response to the unexplained and damaging closures of local spaces and regeneration plans released by the WESTWAY TRUST in 2015, that whitewashed the local area.

2015

2014

WESTWAY23
unity is strength

Coming together, the local community discovered that much was wrong with the Trust, an organisation that has dominated North Kensington for almost fifty years.

WESTWAY23

Since 1971 it has sent many millions of pounds out of the local area, despite being intended as compensation for the ongoing damage caused to local people by this innercity motorway. Westway23 continue to demand that the Trust is controlled by local people and overwhelmingly benefits the community from the grassroots up.

2016

2017

The pressure Westway23 have applied consistently to the Trust has brought about many changes, including the resignation of the Chief Executive in 2017 and Chair in 2019 and a Review into Institutional Racism. Many of those senior staff responsible for the original 'Destination Westway' plans and closures are no longer at the Trust.



2018

In spite of the many achievements of Westway23 and the local community, the Westway Trust is still dominated by people not from the North Kensington community (or even surrounding areas). The Trust continues to operate in a corporate way that does not reflect the creative, innovative and self-supporting culture of the local area.

EGOS

2014

MAY : Eviction notice served on Stables

NOVEMBER : 2014 AGM - Members of W23 (pre-formation) attend



2015

JANUARY : Stables licence runs out

MARCH : First 'Destination Westway' plans publicised/submitted

- : Petition to "Save Portobello Road from the Portobello Village/Westway Space" launched by Chris Sullivan - reaches 18,000 signatories
- : W23 Facebook page launched - grows into a community platform of over 2000
- : First Westway23 meetings at Tabernacle

APRIL : W23 support the presentation of Maxilla petition to the Town Hall

- : W23 attend and speak at Reclaim Brixton event
- : W23 Photo on the Green
- : 6 Flyover meetings

MAY : Grenfell Fun day

- : MauMau Fundraiser gig
- : Supported Swinbrook RA consultation
- : W23 Portobello Market stall

JUNE : Mock the Opera March

- : BBC phone in with Robert Elms



JULY : First Creative Community Procession

SEPTEMBER : Westway Trust 'Arts & Culture Conversation'

- : Urban Dandy "No Trust in Westway Trust?" blog series

OCTOBER : 'Axe Remembers' film trailer

- : W23 member asks RBKC for support at 'Ask Nick' session at Al Manaar

NOVEMBER : W23 Public Meeting at the Tabernacle
- Trust refuse to attend

- : 2015 Trust AGM at St Helen's Church
- W23 lead community shutdown
- : Alan Brown sent written evidence of Institutional Racism



2019

COLLIDE

2016



JANUARY : W23 members form RAP23 - Residents Against / Reduce Air Pollution

: W23 looks into Neighbourhood Forum/Plan for Westway

: W23 formulate idea for community oversight through Co-opted Trustees

FEBRUARY : W23 attend JustSpace City Hall conference

: W23 newsletter details the years activities

MARCH : W23 member organisations blocked from membership of Westway Trust

: Stables closes

: W23 send Trust leadership specific request for investigation into Institutional Racism

APRIL : W23 members start North Kensington Library campaign

MAY : W23 member joins board of Westway Trust - agreed as "only the start" by Chair

JUNE : W23 gather over 100 responses to the Westway Trust Maxilla consultation

: W23 stall at JustSpace Conway Hall conference

: W23 hold Friends of the Earth Basecamp workshop

: Library March to Town Hall

: Stables Community Day



JULY : Second Creative Community Procession

: W23 members speak at DIY Cultures event at Richmix, Brick Lane

OCTOBER : Start of Save Wornington College Campaign

NOVEMBER : W23 attend Mayor of London 'London Plan' workshops

: CivicWise introduction to W23 and the Westway

: 2016 Trust AGM at Bevington School - W23 repeat community calls for change

: W23 request community oversight of the Trust in the form of Co-opted Trustees

2017

JANUARY : W23 members seek legal advice over Public Sector Equality Duty - described as a "grey area that requires a court case to clarify"

FEBRUARY : W23 supports community protecting tennis and squash courts

MARCH : W23 members meet Alan Brown, Angela McConville, Mark Lockhart to challenge Trust over Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) in relation to Flyover closure

MAY : Resignation of Community Director labelled as being "dangerously close to the community" as an "internal activist" who had "gone native" and was "lost in the field"

: WT produce new Equality & Diversity policy with Action Plan

: WT produce statement denying requirement to follow PSED

STARING INTO

JUNE : Grenfell Tower fire

: Westway Trust agree statement on African Caribbean Cultural Centre

AUGUST : Westway Trust CEO, Angela McConville, resigns

OCTOBER : Second Destination Westway plans publicised/submitted

NOVEMBER : W23 member turned down as Westway Trust Trustee
(blocked by Chair & Interim CEO - now Joint CEO)

DECEMBER : Charitable Purposes committee is formed
: 2017 Trust AGM at Maxilla Social Club

2018

JANUARY : W23 raise concerns over Westway Information Centre

FEBRUARY : W23 member joins Charitable Purposes committee
as Co-opted Trustee (member previously turned down as Trustee)

MARCH : Second Destination Westway plans fail to pass planning

APRIL : W23 Trustee resigns from WT board citing tokenism
: W23 members arrange General Election Hustings at the Village

MAY : 'Don't Trust the Trust' press conference

JULY : W23/UCL Summer School with international students

OCTOBER : W23 formulate demands for radical change
: W23 members visit Charity commission

NOVEMBER : Launch of Review into Institutional Racism - call for Trust Chair to resign

: W23 gain minority Trustee support for radical change
: #timeforchange #23acresofchange Facebook posts demand 'radical change'

DECEMBER : Westway Trust Vice Chair, Karen Bendell, resigns

: W23 formulate and propose new board structure and constitution options
: 2018 Trust AGM at Maxilla Social Club - Demands for radical change delivered

2019

FEBRUARY : W23 discover only 1 Senior staff member out of 22 is a local person.
Senior staff cost over £1million annually. Local grants are £100k each year.

MARCH : Westway Trust Chair, Alan Brown, resigns (effective in May)

: statement of support for Supplementary Schools's given at full council meeting
: RBKC Cabinet Member for Communities gives statement of support to W23 member
at Full Council meeting

MAY : Expected release of Review into Institutional Racism



www.westway23.org

www.facebook.com/groups/westway23

EACH OTHER'S EYES



“Councillors, I am here to present my **petition** ‘Save North Kensington Library for Public Use’ ”

Written by Eve Wedderburn and read by Jacob Rety to a full council meeting on October 19th 2016 on behalf of Save North Kensington Library Building for Public use campaign group [aka Friends of North Kensington Library].

We have had many discussions as a group about what I would say when I came here today. The first version that I wrote of this speech was full of our willingness to work together with you on all the issues at stake in this particular move.

We appealed to your consciences, we appealed to your sense of vision, we appealed to your Conservative values. But everybody here knows that no matter how carefully our arguments are parsed, you have already taken a decision on this matter.

That decision has been taken by a few people in the majority party, and the whip has informed the rest of you how you will vote. Whatever I say to you now, this is a foregone conclusion that doesn't represent the interests of the people of the community and in fact is about a few Councillors doing a few favours for people they know.

The case of the library is the latest in what Cllr Nick Paget-Brown has smugly described as a hard-nosed approach to property management, but to everyone else looks like the loss of yet another community venue. This is blatantly an attack on working class people: this building was built by public donation for advancement of working class education. Handing it over to a prep school with fees of over £6000 a term is an absolute insult to the people of the area. It is hard to imagine a more offensive way to manage this building.

Also hugely insulting in this case is the council's derisory 'consultation' process. Choosing where the toilets go in the new building is not genuine public engagement and you know it. The architect's proposals for the new building are an absolute embarrassment. They describe taking account of the surrounding area by leaving a similar gap between buildings and building to a similar height. That's it. The increased floor space they claim for the new building depends on ignoring the unutilised floor space of the current library. They report hoping that they can fit in as many books as the old library, but this is not guaranteed. The most used room of the current building, the computer room, will not be recreated in the new building. **With serious and unanswered questions about how all the library users, including children, will share their space, and about integrated access for the youth club, but only a single lift to transport large groups of wheelchair users to the club, RBKC is setting up user groups for conflict. All no doubt convenient when you decide you want to close youth services all together.**

NOSES TOUCHING TIPS

DARING THE OTHER TO BACK DOWN

In the original speech I wrote we spent some time addressing your bad faith arguments about disabled access, an issue which is so unimportant to you, that you have contacted precisely no disabled peoples' groups to discuss arrangements, at the old library or the new. I also responded to your sleight of hand about the old building's listed status where you both argued that it made the library un-upgradeable and funded that same upgrade for the new tenant with concessionary rent rates. I politely questioned whether an £11-million-pound new building was really a fiscally sound response to such issues.

But let's be honest about what is really going on here. The decision to consolidate the library and the youth club onto one site is not because of a visionary new strategy in which we finally persuade disaffected youngsters to go into the library. Council officers pretending this is about anything but facilitating private interests insult everyone's intelligence. This is about freeing up the old library for the neighbouring prep school, and building a new building whose top two floors will also be leased, to whom planners euphemistically describe as third party users. These third party users will be primary school children from schools who can afford to lease the space. To pretend that this means anyone but private schools is disingenuity that borders on fraud.

Surprise, surprise, Cllr Fielding-Mellen's children are on the list for the schools involved, a conflict of interest he wasn't minded to announce when he proposed this strategy. The whole project is about the expansion of private schools into what are currently public spaces. These schools – Notting Hill Prep and Chepstow House – already treat people who can not afford their fees with contempt. Notting Hill Prep refuse to answer community requests to discuss their expansion plans, and Chepstow House will not even answer emails from the Youth Centre about the Centre possibly hiring their football pitch. So we are not expecting much from the supposed multi party use of the new sports facilities, the management of which planners are already dodging questions on.

Go ahead and help these well-funded and elitist institutions if you must, but do it without giving them our library building. It's not yours to give, it belongs to the community and you should have consulted us. We have plenty of ideas about how you might manage the building – this is the community whose creative interventions are responsible for example for Westway Trust, Westway Community Transport, the opening of Powis Square Gardens and so on. We have a history of transforming unimaginative and neglected private space into opportunities for the whole community. And since you are happy enough to slap compulsory purchase orders on council and social tenants – why not slap a few on those empty houses owned by off shore banks, and hand them over to the prep school?

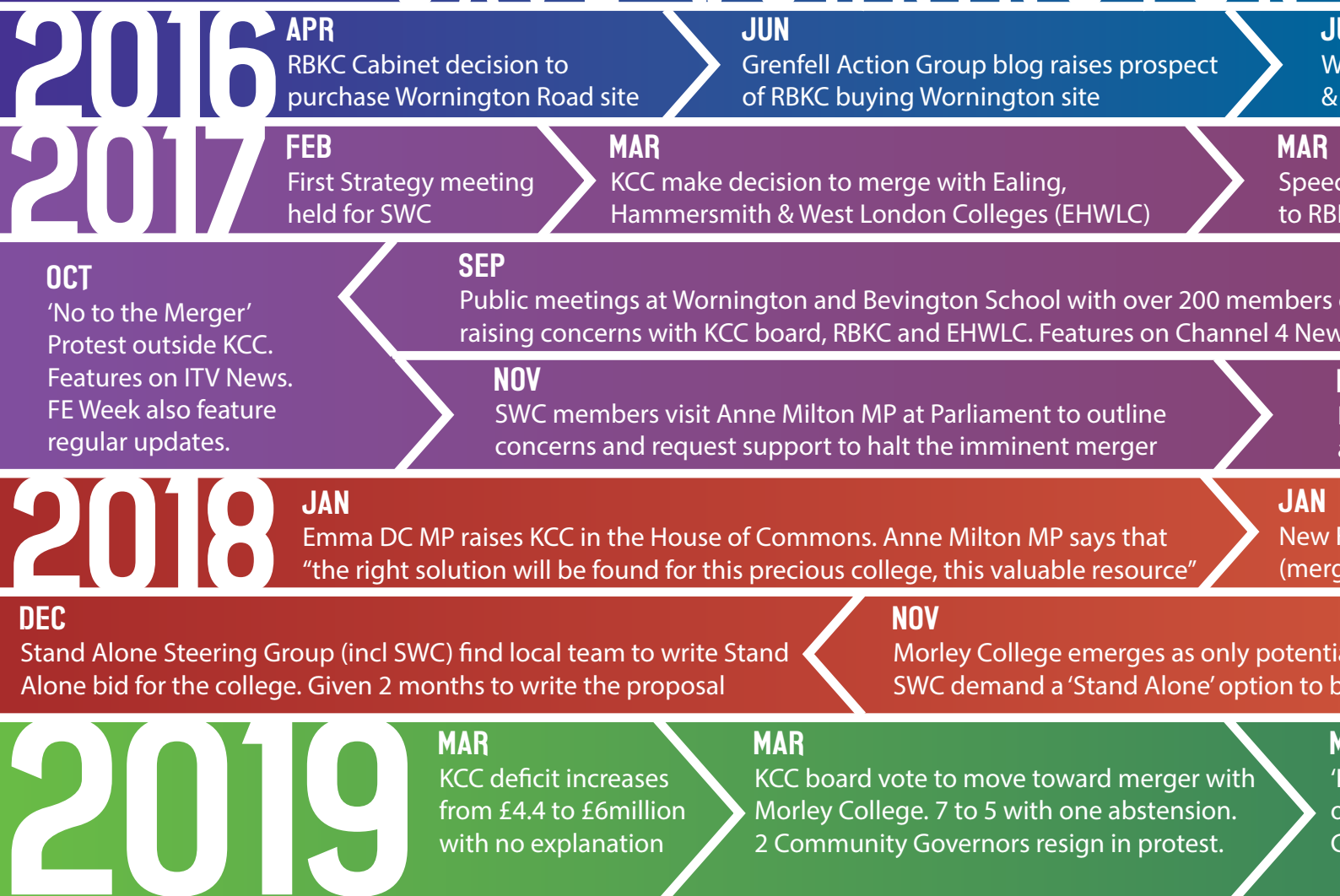
Councillors. You are happy to trade on the artsy, bohemian and creative reputation of this area. But while you happily congratulate yourselves on your house prices, you should stop to think about how much of that value is to do with the rich history of community partnership that you are turning your back on here. What a disappointment you are and what an embarrassment to democracy this whole process has been.

Friends of North Kensington Library

www.northkensingtonlibrary.org

DIVIDE AND RULE

SAVE WORNINGTON



From the 'Save Wornington College' Facebook page, 27 September 2017

For the second night in succession, the community of North Kensington came together to share and air their concerns over the direction and stewardship of one of its assets. Unlike the 'Reclaim our Carnival' meeting yesterday evening, this time the community were not faced by a panel that intimately understood the discussion that was about to take place.

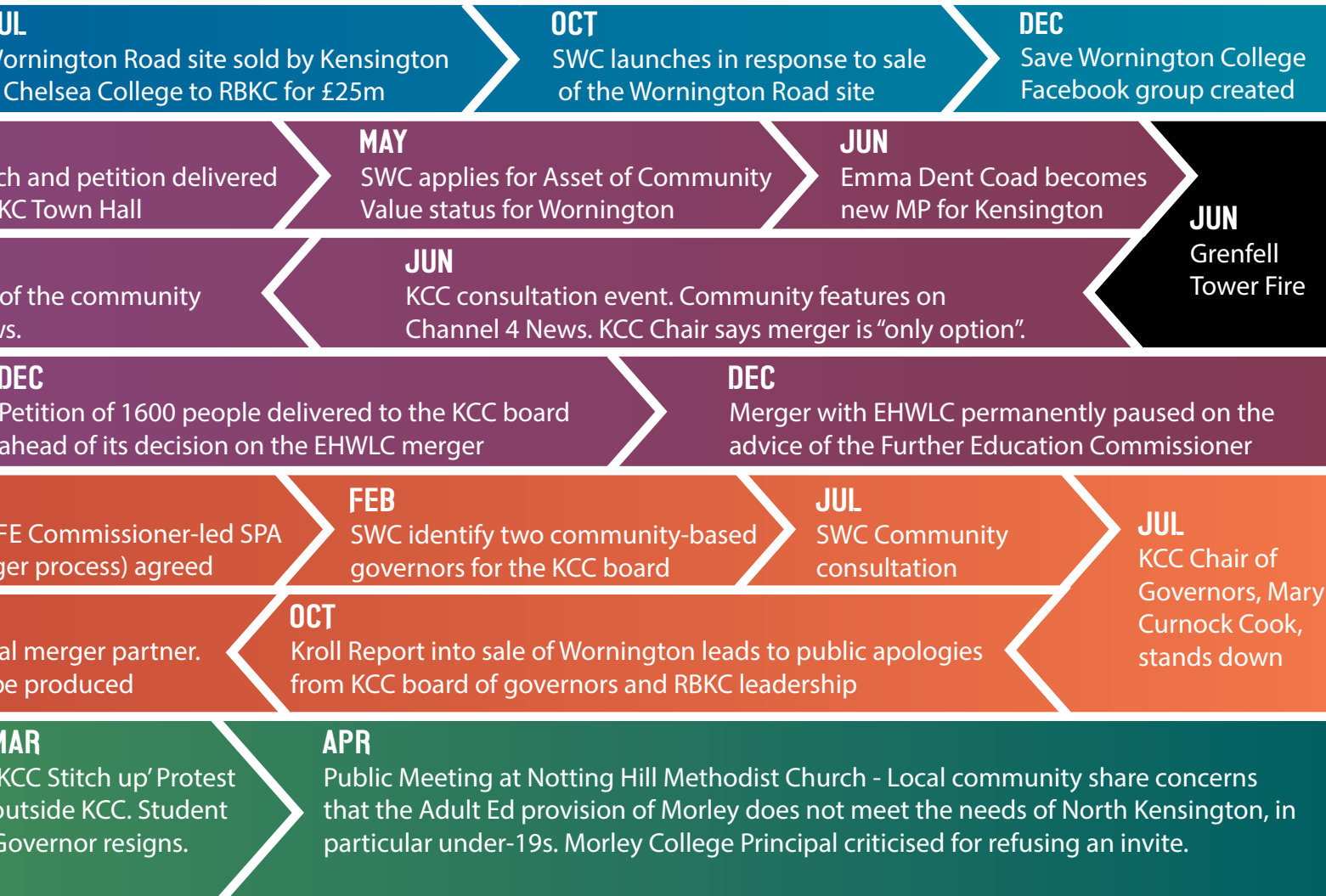
Instead, for this meeting on the future of Kensington & Chelsea College, we were looked upon by some of the stoniest faces I have seen in some time. It was fitting that we were in a primary school hall, bums on seats, being glared at by four headteachers and a deputy. And throughout the meeting it seemed that that familiar school assembly dynamic was what they were expecting. As Paulo Friere calls it, the 'Banking Model' of education; We talk, you listen. You are but vessels for us to impart our wisdom and knowledge.

Except, what is the collective wisdom and knowledge that this panel - made up of the Chair of Governors, Interim Head, Tri-Borough Director of Schools Commissioning, Chief Executive of the Hammersmith & West London College and RBKC Deputy Leader- can impart upon an entire community that has done what this community has over so many years?

There are people who put out propaganda that claims that this community is only coming together like this since the fire of Grenfell Tower. The multitude of people who have been in the area for decades, let alone the past few years, know this is nonsense. This community always turns up when it knows something is amiss.

This meeting laid it out for all to see. These people have no viable solutions. I use the word that has been twisted and used to threaten this community, because 'viability' has been consistently warped to imply

COLLEGE TIME LINE



a financial impossibility. But by definition, viability is the ability of something to work successfully. It is not only about money. It is about something being fit for purpose and therefore successful.

The community made it clear last night what success looks like. We want a community college that can provide a diverse range of courses to a diverse range of people. We want a college that is focused on this community and all who come into it. We want a college that is run in a way that guarantees that the locality comes first. We want a college that retains its physical space and its political autonomy. That would equal success. It's the job of the local authority, governors and staff to do the math and make it happen.

Yet the people up front made it clear last night. They cannot deliver that success. But, more critically, they appear unwilling or unable to even TRY to deliver what we want.

This is where I really take issue. Because at no point did any of these head teachers, or the deputy, give the remotest impression that they were able or willing to think beyond their immediate understanding. Which is as infuriating as it is worrying. These people are not facing up to their own limitations. They are not facing up to the fact that they are not dealing with a hall full of children.

I saw the exact same thing when i first became a governor of a local failing primary school. A governing body and leadership entrenched in its way of thinking. It leads to failure, excuses and bullying of anyone who dares to challenge the status quo. It soon leads to corruption and scandal.

From KCC to Grenfell Tower, we are seeing this same situation play out over and over and over again. It really is time to change the record.

LAUGHING HIGHLY AMUSED GLASS MARBLES FLY OUT THEIR JAR TURBULENT SCRABBLE

FAILED BY

Failed By The State was both off the cuff and deeply rooted. It emerged as a consequence of a number of factors outside of Ish and myself's control. It was funded by Redfish, who were funded by Russia. The original idea was very different from the



output. And the final film is a compromise between the various pull factors. It has stood up well as time has gone on, which given it was made four months after the fire, is a feat unto itself.

The first pitch I sent was about the public order operation the police and authorities enacted in the immediate aftermath. I've yet to see any proper work done in this area. Redfish asked that I get Lowkey to present the film. He was up for it, but pulled out at the last minute due to time issues. I then suggested Ish, who was away for the weekend. We told him of his part on Friday and began on Monday, but as were the times, you could set out any day and the story would be in your face. On that day, it was a protest to save Wornington College, leading us to get the interviews we used with Ed Daffarn (Grenfell Action Group) and the popstar Lily Allen.



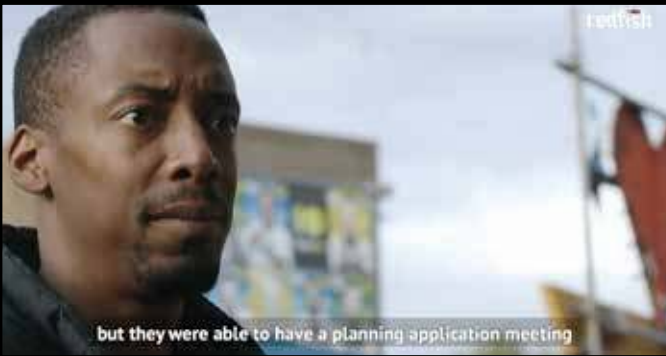
"AS WERE THE TIMES, YOU COULD SET OUT ANY DAY AND THE STORY WOULD BE IN YOUR FACE"

WATCHING THEM AS THEY BICKER

EYES OFF THE TABLE

THE STATE

The film's narrative moved away and against the productions based around grief and emotion which were everywhere at the time. There was a way in which bereaved and survivors became collateral, they were used to add credence or



exclusivity. A media driven agenda, which did nothing for them. We sought to make a film that was different in both ends and means to the typical media work. For example, Redfish have the rights to the final film, but all of the rushes are the community's, with hard-drives with all the footage with Grenfell United and the Westway23. We did not

seek to go for heart-strings, we sought to make a film that put the argument for self-governance on the table.

The embryos that will breed fundamental change in this country are growing, slowly but surely. Since Failed By The State was made, some battles have been lost, but people still believe in the necessity to organise amongst themselves to take back what is theirs. In modern Britain, the amount of rights we have that are not being met due to the market state's dogmas defies reason. Especially when one considers the wealth some have. I have no doubt that one day, North Kensington will rise and take up the cudgels of governance. Failed By The State more than anything else is agitprop towards this end. Something fundamentally must change, because the cabinet system of RBKC means an elected dictatorship of Tories run North Kensington, where they have no mandate whatsoever. It is a disgrace. Yet, due to



a number of issues within the local Labour Group, something more than a personnel change is needed. **Towards the People's Republic of North Kensington...**

Words by Daniel Renwick

"I HAVE NO DOUBT THAT ONE DAY, NORTH KENSINGTON WILL RISE AND TAKE UP THE CUDGELS OF GOVERNANCE"

NO LONGER VIGILANT WHO WINS?

RECOVERY MUST BE COMMUNITY LED

What does “community led” mean?

Does it mean consultation exercises carried out by council officers and/or external professionals?

Does it mean advisory groups made up of local people volunteering their time in rooms of paid council representatives?

Does it mean local organisations being governed by unlocal people?

Does it mean following the path of least resistance back to “business as usual”?

Evidence from hundreds of disasters across the globe, shows us that communities must lead their own recoveries. The evidence also shows that moments of disaster are moments of crisis in the original sense. That is, a moment of decision and change where what is possible becomes visible. Visible in the way we immediately respond with compassion, selflessness, creativity and mutual aid, whilst authorities and institutions flounder. Visible in the alternatives and solutions demanded by people who have no shortage of ideas and ability.

The aftermath of the Grenfell Tower Fire was (in line with so many other disasters) a remarkable show of love and solidarity and community. It was a moment of sickening crisis that, as we come out of the immediate and overwhelming humanity of our collective response to horror, must lead to an example-setting prosecution for those responsible and must deliver decisive and long lasting change for those whose lives will never be the same again.

North Kensington is filled with people who have healed - and are healing - from a variety of traumas. The constant growth of grassroots activity is an outward manifestation of that healing and is fundamental to it. Pains and struggles dealt with by creation and mobilisation. People who have, over and over, turned their pain and anger and frustrations into real and meaningful healing activity - organisations, festivities, networks, buildings, artworks, publications, parks, playgrounds, campaigns and so much more. Too many have been subsequently co-opted to fit a broken system of top-down management. And more trauma caused in the process.

Today, in the context of our greatest collective community disaster and the space that presents for real change and democratic progress, what does a 21st century system of leadership and accountability look like in North Kensington?



Dedicated to Grenfell United, who, even at their most vulnerable, have been an example of “community led”.

And dedicated to the community of North Kensington, who always aspire to lead, often without knowing it.