

LETTER TO EDITOR

EALING COUNCIL NOW PUTS SOUTHALL TOWN HALL ON SALE

Does Ealing Council & Southall Labour leaders doing enough for Southall Residents ?

Dear Editor,

I am writing on behalf of Southall Community Alliance to express our worries about the way in which the future of Southall Town Hall is being dealt with by Ealing Council.

In December 2016 the Council took a decision to dispose of Southall Town Hall. Although there has been no consultation with the users of the building or public discussion, it was decided that the building was too expensive to run and had to be disposed of.

Southall Town Hall is Southall's main civic building and has 12-15,000 visitors annually. This community building has 16 tenants, consisting of charities, businesses and social care providers. Nearly all users are from ethnic minority backgrounds, often do not speak English and have many difficulties in accessing public services.

This is very much a community building that helps the poor and disadvantaged and provides advice, advocacy, training, employment and community services to thousands of Ealing residents annually.

Ealing Council officers have said that the building runs at a loss and



would need a lot of investment in repair costs. We were told that there is not enough money to pay these costs and that the building needs to be sold. But, we have provided evidence that the building makes more than enough money to pay for its costs. The problem is that the Council were taking large sums of money to pay for their staff and cleaning services and by taking out these sums of money it made it look as if the building was expensive to run. The Council chose to take rent paid by tenants and use it to pay for staff who do not even work more than 2 days a week in the building.

The Town Hall clearly makes enough income to pay for its running but it is the way that some Council departments have chosen to use that money, that has generated a 'deficit'.

We have told Ealing Council that the building can and should be run in a different way, for the benefit of the public. We would like to see Southall Town Hall run as a social enterprise, improving services to residents and completely removing reliance upon the Council to finance the building in future.

To date, Council officers have not properly considered our proposal and have instead insisted upon selling a his-

toric building, worth millions of pounds without properly considering the difficulties this will cause to the many people who seek help in the building.

We are asking that :

" Members of the Southall public be informed about the Councils plans to get rid of this historic building

" The rent paid by tenants should be re-invested back into the building and not pay for staff who do not work regularly in the Town Hall

" Southall Town Hall should be handed over to community organisations to manage. The Council has done this in other parts of Ealing but not, so far, in Southall

We hope that you can raise awareness of this issue and allow a proper discussion to take place about how such an important public building should be run and managed. This is the only way that the people of Southall will not lose yet another important building, that offers assistance to our residents.

Yours sincerely

Janpal Basran

Network and Community Development Manager

US Man Tries To Burn Indian-Americans' Store In Florida

WASHINGTON: A man in Florida tried to burn down a convenience store owned by Indian-Americans because he thought the owners were Muslims, officials said.

Richard Lloyd, 64, told police officials that he wanted to "run the Arabs out of our country" so he pushed a dumpster in front of the Port St Lucie store on Friday and set the contents on fire, St Lucie County Sheriff Ken Mascara said in a news release posted on Facebook.

The fire was put out quickly and didn't cause much damage since the store was closed and protected by security shutters.

According to the Sheriff, at approximately 7:40 am, deputies were called to the Met Mart store in reference to a white male in front of the store acting suspicious.

"When the deputies arrived, they noticed the dumpster had been rolled in front of the doors and the contents were lit on fire," said Sheriff Ken J Mascara.

Mr Lloyd told detectives that he assumed the owner was an Arab and that angered him because of "what they are doing in the Middle East," Mr Mascara said. "It's unfortunate that Lloyd made the assumption that the store owners were Arabic when, in fact, they are of Indian descent," the sheriff said. He said Lloyd's mental health will be evaluated and the state attorney's office will decide if this was a hate crime, CNN reported on Sunday.

Lloyd was charged with first-degree arson and booked into the St Lucie County Jail in lieu of a \$30,000 bond.

According to CNN affiliate WPEC, Lloyd told investigators he tried to buy a bottle of Tropicana orange pineapple juice at the store a few days ago but was told they didn't have any.



Seema Malhotra MP secures commitment from Minister to address needs of young people in Brexit negotiations



Seema Malhotra, Member of Parliament for Feltham and Heston, has secured the Government's commitment that they are considering all options for collaboration in education across the EU post-Brexit.

Two amendments tabled by Seema Malhotra to the Brexit Bill called on the Government to stand up for the rights and opportunities of British young people so that they are not left worse off than their European counterparts after Brexit.

This includes the right for under 25s to work, to study at colleges and universities to trav-

el without visas within the EU and to participate in schemes such as the Erasmus scheme - so they don't lose out from the opportunities provided by membership of the EU. New Clause 167 called on the Government to publish an impact assessment

of the effects of Brexit on the rights and opportunities of young people and New Clause 166 would ensure the Government must seek to maintain the current rights and opportunities British young people enjoy as they negotiate Brexit.

Apna Des

W E E K L Y

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