



The Counties Residents' Association

Protecting the interests of the community

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BY E MAIL

1 February 2010

Mr Chris Carter,
Editor
The Ilford Recorder

Dear Sir,

Our Local Studies Library

We are writing to express the opposition of the CRA Committee to the proposals contained in the report entitled '*Library Service Improvement Plan*' which went before the Leisure Scrutiny Committee on 20 January.

If the staffing of our Local Studies Library were to be cut to one unqualified librarian, whose main job was to make appointments for people to visit the Library, it would be a disaster. Without expert knowledge on hand, many people would not know where to start to find the material they are looking for.

The report admits that what is currently one of the best local history services in London with 59 hours of opening, would become one of the poorest, with only 25 hours of appointments available. It states: "*It is unlikely that heritage services would be able to meet current performance targets for use and satisfaction levels.*"



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It is hard to believe that a Council which has had the foresight to restore Valentine's Mansion and its heritage, which has now been saved, should contemplate losing our expert local history librarian - an irreplaceable and invaluable resource.

The report recognises that the Local Studies Library provides far more than historical knowledge of our Borough. It states: *"Local Studies and Archives are highly valued by small sections of the local community and help to contribute to a sense of place, enabling people to build their sense of belonging through finding out about the past."*

At the Leisure Scrutiny Committee on 20 January Councillor Weinberg said: *"we are not doing away with librarians..."* let's hold him to that.

Yours sincerely,

Helen E Zammett
Chair
Counties Residents' Association