



The Counties Residents' Association

Protecting the interests of the community

THE THREAT TO OUR LOCAL HISTORY DEPARTMENT

As you know, there is a Local History section on the third floor of the Central Library in Ilford. It is staffed by a senior librarian, one part time local studies and archive assistant and four part time staff.

The Council is proposing to reduce this staffing to *one unqualified* librarian. This person would operate a booking system whereby the public could only visit the Local History Library by appointment - 25 hours a week would be available for this. A report put before the Leisure Scrutiny Committee on 20 January admits: "*It is unlikely that heritage services would be able to meet current performance target for use and satisfaction levels.*"

The report continues to state that it would be difficult to conserve vulnerable material in the future, collect further material or provide professional advice and support to users. Between 6,000 - 7,000 queries are dealt with each year - apart from people visiting to look at and use the material in the library.

Once the knowledge and expertise of the qualified librarians is lost, it is lost for ever. The CRA would never have known about the original plans and designs of the houses on the Counties Estate, which were in cardboard boxes at the back of the archives. These were invaluable in supporting our case to become a conservation area.

The report continues: "*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.*"

What can I do?

1. As Councillor Weinberg is leading a consultation on this, you could email or write to him at:-
Redbridge Council, Town Hall, Ilford, Essex IG1 1DD cllr.weinberg@redbridge.gov.uk
2. Write to your local councillor:
Wanstead Councillors are Mayor Thomas Chan, Cllr Michelle Dunn and Cllr Alex Wilson.
Snaresbrook Councillors are Cllr Chris Cummins, Cllr Peter Goody, Cllr Sue Nolan.
They can be reached by email or write to them at:- cllr.<SURNAME>@redbridge.gov.uk
Redbridge Council, Town Hall, Ilford, Essex IG1 1DD
3. Write/email your MP:-
Mr Harry Cohen, House of Commons, London, SW1A 0AA. cohenh@parliament.uk
4. Attend one of the Area Committees and speak.
Area 1 Committee, 29 March 2010, 7.15pm, Wanstead Church School
To speak please contact Joseph on 020 8708 2160 joseph.asante-yeboah@redbridge.gov.uk