

5. Address by Mr Artwell – East Oxford Community Centre

Once again, I find it is necessary for me to be so concerned that I must speak to you this time on behalf of the Friends and Users of East Oxford Community Centre.

At the Public Meeting on Monday 6th July, I was Elected as the Campaign Co-ordinator to defeat the plan of Mr Tim Sadler and other Officers to ignore the wishes of the Friends and Users of East Oxford Community Centre. Councillors are you aware that Officers have issued formal Notice to Quit to the Trustees, this comes into force on 31 August 2015?

You are Elected Councillors, you have been Elected to represent the people of Oxford, not the over paid Officers who in this case seem to be acting against the people of Oxford East, possibly without your approval?

I wish to explain some of the issues that are being used to justify the removal of the Trustees from the management of East Oxford Community Centre.

EOCA is a Charity. There has been some difficulties with the Bar, which Mr Tim Sadler is using against the Trustees. Did any Councillors agree to the plan to remove the Trustees when the local people do not want this to happen?

Is it fair to use the Bar disaster as their excuse for the closure.?

Please NOTE there are no problems with EOCA's accounts. They are praised each year by their auditor.

Time is short. My Campaign would have started in January, but the Trustees asked me to delay the Campaign because they were negotiating with Mr Sadler and the Trustees did not want my Campaign to antagonise Mr Sadler et al.

The reason the Campaign to save EOCC has started so late is because the negotiation with Mr Sadler came to nought and the Notice to Quit remains in force.

Councillors, I asked a question at the CEB meeting on the 12th May. I was seeking to know what was Labour controlled Oxford City Council's plan for Community Centres in Oxford. The written answer I received was that, as long the Community Centres were well managed, the Labour Controlled City Council had no designed on the Community Centre. The Trustees of East Oxford Community Centre managed the Centre well, and they are not paid an obscene salary, in fact they receive no salaries at all. We can see no reason why the Officers issued this Notice to Quit.

Councillors, surely you can understand why we are afraid of the Labour Controlled Oxford City Council. We have seen what Labour have done to the large beautiful and well used Community Centre in Cowley; Labour have reduced it to a "room" where it would not be possible to swing a cat and there is no space for a Bar and socialising.

Labour have ignored the wishes of the people of Oxford East to be able to Swim at Temple Cowley Pools and Gym. We have watched with horror Labour's treatment of the Community Centres in Northway and the traders in the Covered Market. Finally Labour's criminal plan to criminalise homeless people trying to find somewhere to rest their heads on a cold Oxford night.

Elected Councillors, I ask you, beg you to stand with the campaign and help us achieve an East Oxford Community Centre for the people of East Oxford, Managed by the people of East Oxford.

Councillors, you speak of "inclusion" and of wishing to see local people contributing and participating in local concerns. Elected Councillors please help us to reverse this plan by the Officers to remove the EOCA Trustees who have managed East Oxford Community Centre for very many years.

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