

# University honours anti-violence campaigner



HONOURS: Margaret Mizen, sixth from left, at the degree ceremony

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THE mother of a murdered schoolboy has received an honorary doctorate from a South London university for her work tackling youth violence. Margaret Mizen, whose son Jimmy was killed in Lee in 2008, aged 16, received her degree alongside students at the Old Royal Naval College in Greenwich. Mrs Mizen MBE was made Honorary Doctor of the University (HondDUniv) by the University of Greenwich. Since her son's death, she has worked on campaigns to keep young people safe. Professor David Macguire, the university vice chancellor, handed out the degree certificates.

## News IN BRIEF

### Tube drivers to vote over strike

SOUTH LONDON: A trade union representing transport workers is balloting members over strike action. Tube drivers on the Northern line will vote in the RMT ballot following the dismissal of a colleague in what the union says is a "blatant and clear-cut case of victimisation". The ballot closes on November 18.

### Firm chosen for £750m project

BATTERSEA: Swedish firm Skanska has been chosen to lead the conversion of Battersea Power Station into luxury flats. Skanska will begin the £750million project in March. Work has already started on the demolition and replacement of the landmark's iconic four white chimneys. A total of 254 homes will be built within the shell of the power station over the next four years. Philip Gullett, chief operating officer at Battersea Power Station Development Company, said: "Skanska is a leading contractor with the expertise to undertake the work required on this grade II\* listed building."

### Takeaway denied late-night hours

BATTERSEA: A kebab shop's bid for late-night opening has been refused by Wandsworth council on grounds that it would cause a "noise nuisance". The owners of Kebab Feast takeaway in St John's Hill had wanted to keep the premises open until 4am at weekends. But councillors were told that neighbours would be "kept awake" by its customers and refused permission.

# Taxpayers' £1million bill to sell short-life homes

## COST OF 'SOCIAL CLEANSING' UNDER FIRE

A TOWN hall has paid nearly £1.1million to lawyers handling the borough's "short-life" housing recall in the past four years.

A Freedom Of Information (FOI) request revealed that Lambeth council paid external law firms £1,092,795 between January 2011 and September this year, to manage the "disposal" of short-life properties.

A separate FOI request also shows that a further £431,820 was spent on in-house and agency staffing to manage the sales.

The short-life housing policy, introduced in the 1970s, saw dilapidated homes being handed over to tenants' co-ops in short-term deals to ease pressure on housing waiting lists.

Since 2011, the council has sold 114 former short-life houses - in some cases tenants had lived in the

By JACK GRIFFITH

properties for many years and had paid for refurbishments.

Last month, the remaining co-op tenants at Carlton Mansions in Brixton were evicted following a county court battle. The building is a key element of the regeneration of Somerleyton Road.

Lambeth council says that the sale of these properties has raised £58million, which has paid for "vital services" and will pay for 1,000 council homes over the next four years.

Julian Hall, from the Lambeth United Housing Co-op, said: "Lambeth council's social cleansing has cost the borough a significant amount of money that could have been better used elsewhere and it has caused a great deal of harm to the health of individuals and to the community at large."



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EVICTION: Carlton Mansions

Councillor Matthew Bennett, Lambeth's cabinet member for housing, said: "Our top priority is delivering new council housing to help the 1,750 Lambeth households in temporary accommodation, the 1,300 severely overcrowded

households and the 20,000 people on our housing waiting list.

"It would be irresponsible to spend taxpayers' money renovating a small number of homes when we are faced with this desperate need.

"The vast majority of short-life properties have so far been handed back amicably and we have rehoused many former occupants."

Vauxhall MP Kate Hoey said there was "no transparency" about how much new social housing was being built.

She said: "This is a shockingly large amount of money to be given to lawyers in order to kick out long-standing members of the community.

"I just do not believe that all the money from sales has gone into housing. The promises made to these residents by councillors were ignored.

"It is a shameful episode in Lambeth housing policy."

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'I do not believe that all the money from sales has gone into housing' - Vauxhall MP Kate Hoey

CHILD OF THE YEAR WINNERS' PHOTOSHOOT

Inside Friday's

South London Press

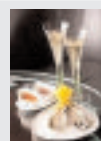
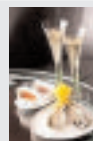
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