



**tweets of the week**

A selection of your comments on Twitter

**@JackRegansDiary**

Reading an old report on a break-in at a warehouse in Deptford where a box full of trousers for fat men were stolen.

**@nxdfdf**

New Cross + Deptford Free Film Festival 2014 is going to be the biggest ever with 35 films confirmed so far. Final programme coming soon!

**@BaggageGirl**

UK heat wave horror. "@sarahwhaites: @BaggageGirl the guy walking round Lewisham yesterday in a tartan thong was taking things too far..."

**@LabourHealth**

".@andyburnhammp: "Instead of respecting Lewisham ruling, @Jeremy\_Hunt trying to ram these rules through Parliament" #r4today

**@pathdependency**

A Fish Called Wandsworth #LondonFilms

**@Botanygeek**

On the train to Croydon peering into Streatham back gardens. Spotted 12, yes 12(!), with punch bags hung in them. Tough neighbourhood...

**@heartstreatham**

Shamelessly name-dropping here, but Streatham's own @joncamping was the Death Eater in Harry Potter & is also a world class photographer!

**@Richardvines**

BBC Food Awards finalists include Gusbourne wine; St George's Market, Belfast; Brockley Market, Lewisham; Aberystwyth Farmers' Market.

**@\_LannyWalker**

Motorbikes. You have your lane and I have mine. Let's keep to them shall we?

**@CarolinePidgeon**

Very exciting to see plans for a new cinema on Lordship Lane East Dulwich

**@CorinxYZ**

Forest Hill feels like Florence today. Presuming Florence is very hot at this time of year. I dunno. I'm not familiar with Italian weather

**@sophieccampbell**

All the fun at brockley station. Only 1 working ticket machine and 1 man at ticket office helpfully engaged in an argument = 1 missed train

**Tweets are printed in the same form as they appear on Twitter. Follow us @SthLondonPress**

**Weather eye**

Dry, sunny periods, light winds, 14C max, 7C min. Weekend: breezy, cloudy, brightening up. For AA Roadwatch and weather services, call 84322 from a mobile or 0906 88 84322 from a landline. Calls cost up to 65p per minute.

**WEB VOTE**

On www.southlondon-today.co.uk We asked: **Are your family's finances improving?**

**YES**  
23%

**NO**  
77%

# South London VIEWS

**Write to:** Letters Editor, *South London Press*, 23 Streatham High Road, SW16 1DS or you can email us: letters@slp.co.uk

**Letters may be edited for legality, space and clarity (deadline: noon, Tuesday)**

## Destroying communities

**MY CONSTITUENT Vivienne Westwood is a long-term resident of Clapham and has always taken a close interest in the local area.**

It was rather shocking to see her attacked by Cllr Pete Robbins in your report of the protest about Lambeth selling the homes of long-term residents ("I'm a celebrity, don't sell off housing", *South London Press*, March 7).

I can only assume that he is feeling defensive about the policy. As a Labour MP, I believe in everyone having their say whatever their background or job and Vivienne has as much right to speak out as anyone.

Maybe Cllr Robbins could explain why Freedom of Information requests asking to see evidence of where the money from the sales has gone have been denied. He speaks of homes that COULD be built, not WILL be built, and he confuses affordable housing with social housing.

His point about English Heritage listings must be countered by the fact that co-ops had a role to play in keeping these houses standing in the first place, despite Lambeth's wilful neglect.

Furthermore, the eviction policy has allowed developers to destroy original features of the homes sold. Local co-op residents have complained bitterly about this, but the council have ignored them.

Lambeth still could engage constructively and allow these residents to become tenants. They have paid rent all their lives to their co-ops and did the council a favour by taking the homes when Lambeth's redevelopment plans were abandoned back in the 70s and 80s. Instead, a short-term policy of selling off



**HOMES PROTEST: From left, Dame Vivienne Westwood and Vauxhall MP Kate Hoey at a rally in Clapham last week**

is destroying mixed communities.

Once sold, they will never be replaced and the special nature of our inner city communities is lost for ever.

**Kate Hoey**  
Vauxhall MP

**I WAS astounded to read the comments by Cllr Pete Robbins. Given that the Labour Party - both nationally and locally - has made much of its celebrity friends over the years, I found Cllr Robbins' remarks about Vivienne Westwood, our friend and neighbour, to be contemptuous, and the defensive nature of them spoke volumes about the council's position on this issue.**

**Clearly what Lambeth council says on this issue has to be constantly scrutinised - where that is even allowed.**  
Julian Hall  
Lambeth United Housing Co-operative

Cllr Robbins says he finds it incredible that Vivienne Westwood, who sells clothes to the super-rich, should be speaking out about affordable housing.

What he failed to mention is that the super-rich are the very people who he is selling these houses to!

He says the houses are dilapidated Victorian English Heritage listed buildings. Lambeth council abandoned these houses decades ago. They were rescued from demolition by The Clapham Society in the first place, and subsequently the housing co-op communities restored and maintained them.

The council should be thanking these people for the fact that they still have these buildings at all!

He says that hundreds of thousands of public money needs to be spent on these houses to turn them into council housing. He and Lib Peck have consistently refused to engage with the plan that Lambeth United Housing Co-operative have brought to them - a plan which has the backing of respected social housing experts and the Clapham Society amongst others, a plan which would not cost the council a single penny and which would improve the houses and enable them to remain council-owned houses occupied by council tenants!

Just last month, an extremely vulnerable co-op resident was evicted from his long-term home in Lillieshall Road [Clapham] - where the rally took place. This man has been living in a safe, supportive community for many years and has now been forced into a very precarious situation because of Lambeth's policy of destroying communities.  
**Suzie Robertson, by email**

## Trust really helps children's lives

**I WOULD like to encourage your readers to watch an inspirational television show I am delighted to be appearing in.**

**BBC1's charity appeal programme Lifeline - in which I visit The Children's Trust - will be aired on Sunday afternoon.**

**During my visit to the charity I met some courageous children receiving rehabilitation for a brain injury and sat in on a physiotherapy session. I witnessed the expertise of highly trained staff and the encouragement of mums and dads as they watched their children make precious steps in the journey of their recovery. As many people know, I myself am living with a brain injury after a car accident filming Top Gear. I can certainly relate to the experiences of these kids and their families. Life suddenly changed for me after my accident in**



**ALL SMILES: Ethan Ridd, nine, meets Richard Hammond on a visit to The Children's Trust** #5381/C

**2006. There was a long road to recovery for me and tough times ahead for my entire family. While I was extremely lucky, some brain injuries can leave a person needing constant care and long-term rehabilitation.**

**Thankfully, The Children's Trust is there to help children make the best recovery they can and to help their families support them in the long term. I'm proud to be a vice president of this incredible charity - I've seen how it helps children and young people rebuild their lives. This year sees the charity celebrating its 30th year. Please help us spread the word about why The Children's Trust is the UK's leading charity for children with brain injury by watching Lifeline on BBC1 at 4.35pm on Sunday, repeated on BBC2 on March 20 at 1pm.**  
Richard Hammond

Vice-president  
The Children's Trust

**● If you have a complaint, call Series Editor Hannah Walker on 020 8835 9721 or write to: South London Press, 23 Streatham High Road, SW16 1DS. All complaints will be fully investigated.**

**If you are not satisfied with the outcome, you may wish to contact the Press Complaints Commission, Halton House, 20/23 Holborn, EC1N 2JD Tel: 020 7831 0022.**

## ALL THIS MAKES YOU PROUD TO BE BRITISH?

**I WOULD like to comment on the recent decision by the National Institute for Clinical Excellence (Nice) to ration expensive drugs for old people. Doctors follow Nice's advice, which is rationally based on medical clinical evidence alone.**

**Now the Department of Health proposes that Nice will require doctors to trump the medical evidence by the imposition of socio-economic criteria, effectively to the great detriment of all senior citizens. The question then is: who exactly is to decide what these economic criteria shall be?**

**I've worked since the age of 16 and I am still paying income tax from a small occupational and state pension. I have never been a guest of Her Majesty's Prisons. I served in the British Armed Forces, faithfully obeyed all the laws of the land for over 80 years... and for what?**

**As an octogenarian, I now find myself behind health tourists, uncontrolled immigration and all the large families on benefits after paying in 44 years of National Insurance contributions. Makes you proud to be British!**

Reg O'Donoghue  
Wooler Street  
Walworth



# Time for new 'frock'

**I HAVE** always considered Councillor Jeremy Clyne an intelligent, sensible and down-to-earth man.

Therefore, I was greatly surprised by his remarks in the *South London Press* (Letters, February 21) condemning proposals to redevelop and improve the area round Lambeth Town Hall.

I know that the residents of Arlington Lodge where I live, Porden Road, St Matthew's Road including Manor Court sheltered housing, the residents of Baytree Road and many residents in Acre Lane support this project.

We feel that Brixton has always been the Cinderella of Lambeth and it is time that it was given a new "frock".

Furthermore, none of the many previous plans to improve Brixton have ever come to fruition, therefore we are keeping our fingers crossed that this one will not fail.

Equally, we are very pleased that, out of three bidding developers, Lambeth councillors have chosen Muse Developments, who gave us a first-class presentation of their proposals indicating that they were very eager to create



**CRITICISM:** From left, Cllr Jeremy Clyne and Cllr Jack Hopkins

a positive and lasting legacy for the residents of this area at the same time as carrying out the development in a responsible manner and giving employment to local residents.

We can't wait for the project to take place.  
**Irene Kowalewska**  
 Arlington Lodge Residents' Association  
 Brixton Hill

□ I HAVE read the article ("Grass roots' councillor is named Community Champion of the Year", *South London Press*, February 28). It would be nice to find out what Cllr Hopkins received his award for. He is a Lambeth councillor with a portfolio to impress the well-being of ALL the residents of this borough.

We in Brixton require his help badly. The clubs which were given licences by the councillors are depriving us of sleep.

Our secretary, on the advice of Cllr Rachel Heywood, has written several letters to Cllr Hopkins for help, so did the residents of Porden Road and those in St Matthew's Road, but Cllr Hopkins must have been so busy that he did not even have time to acknowledge our letters, let alone offer any help.

I am a disabled resident of Arlington Lodge whose human rights of not being able to sleep at night because of noise from the clubs are being violated. Maybe Cllr Hopkins will find some time to help us now.

Christine Scales, Arlington Lodge  
 Brixton Hill

## Money struggles of those with HIV

**MORE** than 15 years after modern antiretroviral medication transformed HIV into a manageable condition, Terrence Higgins Trust's new report **HIV & Poverty** ([www.tht.org.uk/poverty](http://www.tht.org.uk/poverty)) reveals a shocking picture of financial hardship among people with HIV in the UK.

The charity has seen a 15 per cent increase in people accessing its hardship fund, which helps people with HIV in severe financial need cover basic living costs, including food, clothing and heating costs.

As the full impact of the Government's welfare reforms starts to be felt, it is vital that our council [Lewisham] considers the needs of local people with HIV in its plans, and that financial, social and emotional support is available for those whose condition affects their ability to work and maintain financial stability.

HIV and poverty should not be linked. But, without adequate support, financial stress, poor diet, and other factors associated with poverty can lead to mental and physical ill health for people with HIV, in turn making it harder for them to re-enter employment or regain financial control.

Let's do all we can to make sure that HIV and poverty no longer so often go hand in hand.

Rosemilton Sattler  
 Rochdale Way  
 Deptford



## Let's have level playing field over proposed development

BEING born and bred in Bermondsey 76 years ago, I have supported Millwall FC for as long as I can remember.

Lewisham council's treatment of the club in regards to the proposed development is very poor. There should be no deals done behind closed doors and every situation discussed should be transparent as the club are leaseholders of the three plots in question and surely should have been present when discussing their proposed sale.

In my experience of the construction industry, which is of many, many years, the work proposed on these plots surely should have been put to tender. Millwall have carried out numerous projects for the local community, specifically at the forefront in the campaigning to keep Lewisham Hospital A&E open, which fortunately was a success. Where is the loyalty to the club? The report that Sir Steve Bullock was not taking part in the discussion for the proposed sale due of conflicting interests does not wash. Anyone with experience of local authorities will tell you that the mayor is the power behind the throne. The chairman of Millwall FC has spent a



**LANDMARK:** Millwall's ground The Den

substantial amount of money concerning the development of the land around the ground.

Why were his plans batted away by Lewisham planning department? The design and plan for the development would be more beneficial to the local community.

Let us see this whole business and animosity solved on a level playing field please.

**TE** May  
 Brentwood, Essex

## JOIN US ON OUR DAY TO FIGHT AGAINST RACISM

**LEWISHAM** is a vibrant, diverse and multicultural borough thanks to the contribution of many different communities. Lewisham knows that whipping up racism builds support for far right parties like the National Front and more recently the BNP and the EDL.

The European elections in May could result in an increased vote for racist parties. We oppose this and reject any attempt by mainstream parties to capture votes by promoting anti-immigration or fuelling hysteria such as we have witnessed about Bulgarian and Romanian people moving to the UK. It is depressing to read that ChildLine reports an

increase in racist bullying in the classroom after the Government used "go home" vans to deliver its message last summer. We say No to scapegoating, No to Islamophobia and Yes to diversity. We will be joining the national demonstration to mark UN Anti Racism Day at 11am on Saturday, March 22 in central London and urge people to come along and demonstrate with us. Lewisham Anti-Racist Action Group; Bromley, Greenwich & Bexley, Lewisham, Lambeth trades union councils (representing local union branches of RMT, UCU, CWU, UNITE, GMB, NUJ, NUT, TSSA, UCAT, UNISON and PCS) and other signatories in South London

## MAYOR BORIS SEEMS READY TO SLAP DOWN COMMUNITIES

THE role of London Mayor has the capacity to be an inspiring position. As ambassador for a city of more than eight million people who come from all walks of life, it's a post that calls for someone capable of understanding London's diverse communities and building on the huge spirit and energy that beats through the heart of the capital. Boris Johnson is not just seeking to crush that energy — he's cutting off the power supply. He has shut 10 of London's fire stations. He continues to support the closure of critical A&E units. His housing policy is offering investors a feast of plush homes and

leaving crumbs for Londoners. And now, rather than spend money on investing in the people of this city, he is pushing ahead with plans to buy a means of oppression — the water cannon. Rather than alleviate the problems that cause discontented communities to protest, he seeks to slap them down. Water cannons aren't fit for the streets of London and we say Boris Johnson isn't fit to be Mayor of this vibrant city. **Matt Hawkins, John Coughlin, Violeta Vajda, Clare Phipps, Andrea Carey and Mike Keogh, Lewisham Green party candidates for Brockley and Ladywell**

## Thanks for 15 minutes of Fame



**I WON** your competition for 15 minutes of Fame at New Wimbledon Theatre (*South London Press*, February 7). Thank you. I had a great time. I had my own

dressing room and was in two scenes. Here is a picture of me with some of the cast!  
 Connie Ryan  
 Aged 13

## Building homes with a purpose

I WRITE in reply to Cllr Anood Al-Samerai (Letters, March 7).

Dealing with her points:

First, "People should live where they grew up" — this Labour council changed the previous Lib Dem housing allocations policy of six months' residential qualification to one where residents with five years' residence or more get a priority. Second, "There should be

affordable homes in every new development" — this Labour council inherited the Heygate estate redevelopment without a commitment from the Lib Dems to build a single property of affordable rent and now Labour has signed a regeneration deal on the Aylesbury estate with 50 per cent affordable properties (with 75 per cent of that social rents). Third, "Stop the mass sell-off of council housing" — the Lib Dems sold off or demolished nearly 9,000 council homes between 2002-2010 — over 1,000 a year — while Labour has only sold 138 properties since 2010.

Fourth, "Replace Right to Buy sales" — the current Lib Dem coalition government is offering a discount of £100,000 to tenants to buy their own properties and applications in Southwark are now running at 22 per week.

This is why this Labour council will build 11,000 new council homes over the next 30 years with 200 already being built and sites for 500 more identified.

**Cllr Ian Wingfield**  
 Deputy leader and cabinet housing member  
 Southwark council



**CLLR IAN WINGFIELD**