

Item 1

At the Scrutiny Sub Committee "A" meeting on Tuesday 1st July at 7pm a supplemental agenda was presented it contained what officers described as "a statement by Mick Barnard" together with their responses, but gave no prior notice it would be included and did not provide a copy prior to the meeting with no documentary evidence.

I requested that the Chair allow a response to the officers' statements to be forwarded following the meeting, to which he agreed, find below our responses all of which will be supported by documentary evidence on the night of the next Sub Committee meeting 16th September 2008.

1.(original email)

If you are concerned about young people in Southwark please read this and acknowledge or comment. We also request that a short Scrutiny Panel looks into the provision and management of current facilities on/in Peckham Rye Common/Park.

It is unfortunate that some Council Officers often perceive Southwark Caribb as the villains of the piece. The reason it might appear that way is that we have to continually confront officers for failing to communicate or co-operate when our only aim is to provide a much needed service that the Prime Minister, other politicians and almost everyone else including the new Mayor of London say is vital to keep youngsters off the streets.

It appears all the hard work Southwark Caribb put into securing facilities on Peckham Rye with the help of Councillors is now a millstone around our neck, we need to encourage young people to be responsible and feel valued. Unfortunately the attitude of some officers has the opposite effect.

1.1 (officers response)

The parks and open spaces service happily acknowledge that Southwark Caribb F.C. do invaluable work in providing young people with positive alternatives to crime and anti-social behaviour and we do our best to support their activities. It is certainly not our intention to obstruct their activities.

(Southwark Caribb's response)

A list of 17 examples was provided on the night of the Scrutiny Panel 1st July 2008 of officers' lack of co operation and attempts to obstruct whether deliberate or otherwise. The latest involves the allocation of pitches for 2008/09 we have 12 teams the other two clubs have 3 each yet one club was allocated 100% of its requirement, the other club 75% of its requirement and we have 50% despite having 2 thirds of the teams and being the only club to continually use Peckham Rye for the last 10 years.

1.2 (officers response)

Southwark Caribb are one of the dozens of sports clubs, cultural and educational voluntary sector organisations that use Parks and thus we must ensure that we have in place robust arrangements to ensure that the Councils' facilities are

Item 1

equally available to all, as the resources available to the service are inevitably constrained

(Southwark Caribb's response)

Whilst we appreciate that the facilities must be made available to all and because as reported by officers there are constraints on availability we feel regular users of Peckham Rye over the last 10 years should have priority status. Otherwise clubs who do not use Peckham Rye regularly will jump on the bandwagon as referred to in the minutes of the meeting on 14th May 2007.

1.3 (officers response)

These rules(a) protect the interest of all stakeholders.

(Southwark Caribb's response)

Unless sufficient facilities like changing rooms and pitches are provided the interest of all stakeholders cannot be protected.

1.4 (officers response)

(b) protect the Council's interests and assets and (c) reflect the extent to which the Council can act.

(Southwark Caribb's response)

Whether direct or indirect management, lease or a community management committee the asset will always be the Council's and clearly the interest is linked by documentation and the wording there-in will provide the degree to which the Council can act.

1.5 (officers response)

Most of the other clubs that we work with accept this and work within the regulatory and management framework that are jointly agreed or legally defined.

(Southwark Caribb's response)

Whilst we accept regulatory and management framework not all sites operate under the same conditions nor do they provide the services provided by clubs at Peckham Rye, for example Southwark Caribb operate a number of workshops including bike maintenance supported by the Police, gun and knife crime and teenage pregnancy to name just a few. We also encourage disabled and excluded youngsters to get involved and are linked to several T&RA's.

1.6 (officers response)

However Southwark Caribb seem to regard themselves as a special case and can be reluctant to conform to the rules or to apply pressure for them to be changed when they do not suit their purpose.

(Southwark Caribb's response)

Officers appear to be confirming their perception about Southwark Caribb, as a club we conform to all the rules but clearly if these rules appear restrictive we have every right to challenge them. We do this with the full backing of the majority of other clubs/users.

Item 1

1.7 (officers response)

They also on occasion robustly challenge officers trying to discharge their responsibilities in a professional and even handed way. This is an issue we have had to discuss with the club.

(Southwark Caribb's response)

Officers suggest the pressure we apply is somehow unacceptable have they not heard of "lobbying". The example we have provided clearly shows there is nothing even handed or professional about their attitude.

2. (original email)

The latest act of control regards the provision of a large storage container. Permission was granted for a large container for storage purposes, officers indicated there was no money so we suggested trying to raise the money ourselves, officers then told us the cost would include removing the small container on site, the cost of the large container and the cost of permission and license from the Council, despite agreeing to all this officers then indicated they wanted full control and we would not even have our own key.

2.1 (officers response)

Some two years ago officers met Southwark Caribb to discuss changing room requirements at Peckham Rye. At this meeting Southwark Caribb F.C stated that they required three additional changing rooms and a storage container of certain dimension. The dimensions given were incorporated into a planning application which was eventually granted. When the storage container was installed, the club indicated that it was not big enough and they would like a larger one.

(Southwark Caribb's response)

Unfortunately and as usual the facts provided by officers have been distorted and are out of context, a larger container was required because at least 4 other clubs needed storage, on site at the time was a 20' container for storage and a 40' container for storage and changing. The fact is an officer connected with this matter said " I must confess that I can't recall a discussion or find a note of this" and goes on to say "if I am mistaken I apologise" but in the statment above suggest we gave him the dimensions then changed our minds

2.2 (officers response)

A further planning application was submitted for the larger unit (with the Council carrying out the cost of this application), permission was granted a few weeks ago. Currently the Council has no budget to install the new container or to remove the existing one and this was made clear to the club at several meetings.

(Southwark Caribb's response)

On the 18th July 2007 it was agreed that planning permission would be sought to re-site a 40' container behind the temporary facilities, that application was never made, until we raised it for the last time on 28th February 2008. Eventually permission was granted on the 13th May 2008 almost a year before the first request as made.

The excuse given was that planning had lost the application, we are certain

Item 1

that it was never submitted at the first time of asking. As stated above and on other occasions we and other users were prepared to finance the large container, but then came the conditions.

2.3 (officers response)

The existing storage container was installed to service all of the clubs using Peckham Rye. In the past Southwark Caribb have been unwilling to share these facilities. In the light of this we have suggested that the use of the container should be regulated by a license- this would be normal practice anyway. At no point has it been suggested Southwark Caribb could not have a key.

(Southwark Caribb's response)

Although officers indicate there was no budget for the new container just 3 weeks before planning permission was granted they removed the 40' container fitted with lighting from Peckham Rye knowing we had already suggested we might be able to raise the money. To add insult to injury we were told we would have to pay to remove the old container and get a license but then have no control over access.

3. (original email)

Background information

In 2006 officers submitted plans for a cafe on Peckham Rye with limited provision for changing facilities.

At the time Southwark Caribb were occupying an old P.O.W. hut provided by an officer not directly responsible.

At the Planning Committee the officer presenting the application, when questioned, indicated although there were funds for the cafe none had been identified for the changing facilities, the P.O.W huts would be demolished and there would be no provision for a temporary facility

Fortunately the Planning Committee placed a condition on the application that temporary facilities should be provided during the lifetime of the cafe project Nunhead and Peckham Rye Community Council then allocated £60,000 from Cleaner Greener Safer monies towards the cost of 2 mini permanent changing rooms. It was discovered later that officers had failed to allocate the money so there was now a short fall (which a year later was funded by several Community Council's sympathetic to our plight).

At the time and before the shortfall was discovered Local Councillors indentified an additional £65,000 from section 106 monies from 2 large developments less than 100 yards from the proposed cafe site. Question why had officers not considered this?

3.1 (officers response)

This misrepresents the facts. At the point when the brief for the new Peckham Rye cafe was issued for tender to architects, officers identified the aspiration to provide some changing facilities because none were available on Peckham Rye at the time. No funding had been identified to allow for the construction of this element but officers commissioned architects to design in a changing room element at risk and set about finding the funding.

(Southwark Caribb's response)

Item 1

This whole paragraph is complete fabrication, officers clearly indicate no funding was available at the time of attending the Planning Committee on 27th February 2006 despite 2 lots of 106 money available at the time at 2 sites only 100 yards from the cafe site.

3.2 (officers response)

Officers submitted a CGS bid which Peckham and Nunhead agreed. In addition officers secured funding from two s106 agreements.

(Southwark Caribb's response)

Officers did not submit a CGS bid, in 2006 NPRCC Councillors aware there was no funding for the changing facility met with a Senior Council Officer and re-allocated £60,000 from other projects like the green walk on the Thames Water site at Brenchley Gardens. Later it was discovered officers had failed to minute the decision and the money was never allocated.

In 2007 after presenting a deputation to Council Assembly a number of Community Councils allocated £7,500 to make up the shortfall of the lost £60,000 the total was underwritten by Nuhead and Peckham Rye Community Council.

Officers give the impression that the 106 money was identified by them, the fact is Local Councillors identified the 106 agreements, it was only then that officers bothered to try and secure them, they already state at the time of the planning application there were no funds available but there were.

4. (original email)

Just a few months after spending £20,000 on the P.O.W hut officers indicated it was unsafe and had it demolished but would not provide any replacement facilities.

4.1 (officers response)

The POW hut on Peckham Rye that Southwark Caribb had been using had to be demolished to make way for the new cafe.

(Southwark Caribb's response)

At the Planning Committee stage officers intentions were to demolish all the P.O.W huts. It was only the condition placed on the application that saved one of the huts otherwise there would have been nothing.

4.2 (officers response)

The Parks service fitted out one of the remaining huts at a cost of approximately £15,000 for Caribb to use. The club had exclusive use of this building rent and utility free for months.

(Southwark Caribb's response)

Although Southwark Caribb did take on responsibility for the hut, as agreed on 20th November and ratified on the 4th December 2006, facilities were shared with other users and during our occupation there we never any disputes, any vandalism or serious issues.

4.3 (officers response)

A subsequent visual inspection of the building some months later revealed recent serious cracking to the external fabric and the view of the consultant structural

Item 1

engineer was that it was unsound.

(Southwark Caribb's response)

The report following the visual inspection indicated that high winds could render the hut unsafe, only 2 days later the South East experienced the highest winds ever recorded but the hut remained unaffected. Given the problem was highlighted only 6 weeks after the £15,000 fit out it is likely the hut was already unsafe or was it?.

4.4 (officers response)

Reluctantly Southwark Caribb had to be advised that they could not use the building for safety reasons.

(Southwark Caribb's response)

Despite the condition imposed by the Planning Committee officers still failed to provide a suitable alternative and in the end reluctantly provided a metal 40' storage container as replacement facilities.

5. (original email)

In February 2007 Southwark Caribb Attended Council Assembly and presented a deputation however officers attempted to discredit our representatives but we got wind of their plans and were able to impress the Councillors so much they agreed to fund some temporary facilities

At no stage did officers consult about what facilities were required so we ended up with less than satisfactory facilities.

Despite having occupied the P.O.W hut for over 2 years without incident officers insisted all control of the new facility remain with them.

This meant contacting their on site representative not only to open the facility upon arrival but to lock and open it each time any of our players needed access during a match or training.

Their on site representative when complaining reported back that she opened and closed the facility 20 times between 9am and 4pm on one day but forgot to mention there were 12 teams plus referees and a choice of 18 doors, at times we waited up to half an hour, while she looked after her customers in the cafe.

Recently we had a cup game booked for Peckham Rye but due to bad weather it was cancelled and we had to play at Purley, however we were initially refused use of the changing rooms, because the pitch was unplayable and they were linked through the booking process, this despite the fact they would remain empty. It took some persuasion before they relented. But the rule now is they will remain empty for away games and training days.

5.1 (officers response)

A number of meetings were held with users to discuss the use and design of the temporary facilities, including one attended by lead members on 14th May 2006. Other users have been extremely complimentary of the facilities. There is very little flexibility in the design of units of this nature but officers did base the layout of the commissioned structures on a design that was developed for Southwark Caribb by the manufacturers, Extra space.

(Southwark Caribb's response)

Firstly officer have failed to give any response to the first 15 lines between

Item 1

"in February 2007" and " her customers in the cafe"

A transcript of the Council Assembly meeting will confirm the presentation of Southwark Caribb's deputation and the responses from the Executive Member. In fact we believe following that meeting the Executive were unhappy with officers misleading briefing notes.

Secondly the meetings referred to were in fact 2 on the 6th November 2007 and 20th November 2007 to discuss management of the P.O.W. hut the other meeting was in 2007 not 2006 as stated above. At none of these meetings was the design or layout of the new temporary changing facilities discussed.

Please note the last 3 lines mention the manufacturers developed the design and officers based the layout on that, clearly not based on anything Southwark Caribb or any other users might have said because they were not given the opportunity.

5.2 (officers response)

The arrangements put in place at Peckham Rye are driven by two factors
1) *Cost. The Council does not have the resources to staff these facilities so we have tied their management in our contract with the cafe licensee. The cafe is open 7 days a week every week of the year and is ideally placed to open and close these facilities, clean them and monitor their use. The Council pays the licensee for operating this service for us.*

(Southwark Caribb's response)

The P.O.W. hut had been managed by Southwark Caribb for over 2 years with no license and therefore no cost to the Council in management fees. The same arrangement could have applied to the temporary facilities but officers gave the impression they were linked to the cafe through insurance, we later found out this was not true. Although the cafe is open 7 days a week it closes at 6pm so the kids are back on the streets.

5.3 (officers response)

2) Access to all. The changing facilities at Peckham Rye are for the use of all clubs using the pitches there. The principle that has operated hitherto is that use of the changing rooms is linked to a pitch booking (this is the rule that applies to other changing facilities elsewhere in the Borough). We do not (and indeed it would be practically and financially impossible for us to) offer the use of our changing rooms when their away fixtures do not offer changing facilities. No other club has ever made a request of this nature.

(Southwark Caribb's response)

Whilst we agree the facilities should be for all users we can see no reason why these facilities could not be made available all year round and of course would accept there maybe a cost. We would also utilise the facility for our training sessions both in and out of season. Thereby helping to keep kids off the streets more often.

5.4 (officers response)

However, we are looking to put in place arrangements whereby changing rooms are made available for away games as long as this did not stretch the capacity of

Item 1

our licensee to run her business. If we are able to do this, it would be unique in our experience whereby public park facilities are made available to a club playing outside the Borough. Nevertheless the fact that we are seeking to put such arrangements in place should be seen as a testament to the degree that the service will go to support the club.

(Southwark Caribb's response)

We would ask members to make up their own minds about how much officer support the users of Peckham Rye.

Currently in season we pay

£47 for a Senior Pitch + use of changing facilities no extra cost

£35 for a Junior Pitch + use of changing facilities no extra cost

£18 for a Small sided Pitch + use of changing facilities no extra cost

**The proposal for out of season and away games is,
£41.50 for changing rooms only**

The facility will close at 6pm so by the time the volunteers get there from work and the kids arrive from school there is very little time left which means the kids are back on the streets.

If management was passed to the users the cost to the Council would be minimal.

6. (original email)

Every year we have problems completing our matches on time due to bad weather throughout the season, we then have to try and negotiate an extension but officers never give use the full requirement but this year due to an officers' embarrassing and unnecessary intervention in an email exchange between our representative and the on site representative we were able to complete our fixtures. We even thanked all the officers concerned thinking a little praise might help build bridges. Unfortunately it did not work.

6.1 (officers response)

At the meeting held with clubs on the 14th May 2006 it was agreed that the playing season on the pitches on the Rye would be limited to 8 months i.e. Sept-April. The pitches at Peckham Rye are not in the best possible condition and we need time to repair them at season's end and for them to recover. the more they are used, the more cancellations are made to fixtures and the longer the extension of the season. This is a vicious circle.

(Southwark Caribb's response)

We have documentation that disputes the 8 months Sept-April.

Whilst the officers agree pitches are not in the best condition and legitimate users are responsible enough to abide by the ruling, casual users including football, cricket, and other users are allowed to utilise the grassed areas throughout the year without supervision or enforcement so extending the season for regular, legitimate, paying users will have little or no impact.

6.2 (officers response)

Item 1

We booked a contractor to commence pitch repairs in the second week of May, 6 weeks after the end of the formal season, Southwark Caribb asked for an extension to the following week which we were eventually able to grant by postponing the pitch repair process. As a result, the pitches will have a shorter amount of time to recover. This situation is exacerbated by Southwark Caribb's use of pitches in August to hold its summer festival.

(Southwark Caribb's response)

It is interesting to note officers reference to use of pitches in August, what they fail to say is that these pitches are not used by us all year round except for our Annual Summer Tournament, as all our games are played in the Park not on the common.

Furthermore they fail to refer to use of this area by the various festivals like the Irish Festival. Friends of Peckham Rye festival and of course the fair and circus.

7. (original email)

Just last weekend 24th May we met at Peckham Rye for a training session only to be informed on our arrival that the officer referred to above had sent an email to the on site representative instructing them not to open the facility, thus leaving us with dozens of youngsters with no equipment. Fortunately a visiting Councillor after a heated discussion with the site representative managed to gain access. There was no attempt to contact us or any other user group and inform us of the new instruction, however weeks previous the same officer managed to contact all users to remove their equipment with only a few days notice but that's another story.

7.1 (officers response)

Southwark Caribb had not made any booking for this training session or advised us that it was going to take place. As far as we were concerned, the football season has finished mid-May (as Caribb had advised us)

We do not currently book "training sessions" and do not have a tariff for this. No other club has ever requested the use of the changing rooms for a "training session" the club simply turned up and demanded the changing rooms to be made available when they were fully aware of how the Council manages this facility.

(Southwark Caribb's response)

Access was not required to the changing rooms only the storage container where all the equipment is stored. There was no demand, in fact that morning one of the coaching staff called my home and requested I try and resolve the matter by speaking with the cafe owner, unfortunately she refused to speak to me.

7.2 (officers response)

The Council's licensee felt that she had been 'intimidated' into opening the facility and we will have to carry the cost of cleaning it.

However we have indicated that we would be willing to allow Caribb to use the changing facilities for training sessions as long as these are booked and paid for in advance.

Item 1

(Southwark Caribb's response)

The only occasion the cafe owner might have felt intimidated is when the Local Councillor arrived, however I understand from the Councillor that the manager's attitude left a lot to be desired. We have always stated our willingness to clean up after use at no cost to the Council but our offer has never been taken up.