

21 Sep 2009

Dear Leaders of Ealing and Hounslow Councils and Members of the Gunnersbury Park Development and Regeneration Board,

Following my previous letter (see attached "Initial letter"), I have some further comments on the recent events related to the regeneration of Gunnersbury Park and to the Future of Gunnersbury Park Consultation public opinion survey.

With disappointment I realized that the survey has not been delivered to the residents living two miles from the park. Also, a very mild effort has been posed into attaching almost unreadable laminated posters on the gates of the park for the London Mela event. In this occasion, I was told that the Hounslow Council would have been there with a stand and a thousand surveys for the public. I personally looked for the stand but I could not locate it and I did not see any advertisement in the London Meal programme. Was the Council actually there to provide extra information and surveys to the population? I do have some doubt..

Results of this inadequate information campaign is that a significant number of residents continue to be completely unaware of the proposal, residents that will not answer to an undelivered survey and will not be able to question Jura Consultants proposal.

From my side, I am even more convinced than a month ago that the mainstream of the local residents is against the selling of 5.6 acres of Gunnersbury Park for a housing development. After a meeting organized by myself and a few others to debate on this issue, almost a hundred local residents turned out and almost all of them agreed that selling part of the Park was not an acceptable solution for restoring the historical buildings. As a result of this meeting, we have formally created a new group called Save Trees In Gunnersbury (STIG).

STIG is a group primarily committed to the preservation of green spaces of Gunnersbury Park, whilst supporting plans to restore listed buildings. As a formal association, we have the right to be considered and consulted before the implementation of plans that might endanger the green spaces of Gunnersbury Park. Of note, STIG main role will not be to advise and suggest new alternatives, but to support proposals that keep intact the green space. A wide range of alternatives is what Jura Consultants were expected to present in their Options Appraisal report and propose to the public in their survey, task that in the opinion of many, they have failed to deliver!.

As an Ealing resident (and constituent) and member of this new group, I do have questions and requests that I hope will be answered and satisfied by the Leaders of the Councils and the Members of the Gunnersbury Park Development and Regeneration Board.

In brief:

(A) After an informal conversation with some of the Jura Consultants employees involved in the survey, I understood that an "independent" body will be involved in the analysis of the survey. I would like to know details of this independent body that will evaluate the survey.

(B) I would appreciate to know timelines and future steps in the appraisal process, e.g. estimated time for results from the survey, publication of the final report from Jura Consultants, and details on when and where the planning application will be made public, once the decision on how to "regenerate" the park is made.

(C) I would like to be an observer at your meetings regarding the Gunnersbury Park Regeneration.

(D) Details of access roads and car parking linked to the Sports Hub and to the mansions, and planning details of the Sports Hub are not defined in the Options Appraisal. I would like to have these details.

(E) From the options appraisal report it is not clear how Jura Consultants reached the final estimation of the costs for the restorations of the main listed buildings. I would like to know these details

(F) I was told by the Gunnersbury Park Development and Regeneration Manager, Richard Gill, that a petition would be able to stop the planning application of the preferred option. Upon the question on how many signatures are needed for the petition being valid, I did not get a straight answer. I would like to have a clear answer to this question

I am aware that the next stakeholder meeting is scheduled for the 24th of October, but I would appreciate a reply on the above issues before that date.

I hope you will consider this letter and my requests. Ignoring them would not certainly make a good case for the next electoral campaign...

Sincerely yours,

Giuseppina Ortu
Ealing resident
(STIG Member)