

English Supplement

Al-Muntada

of the Iraqi Association

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IRAQI ASSOCIATION

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Council Evicts Local Charities

In February, Hammersmith and Fulham Council has confirmed it will sell seven buildings that are being used by charities and community groups, including Palingswick House, which houses 21 charities. West London Free School looks almost certain to be based within Hammersmith and Fulham, after the council announced it, backing, it is suggested that the school may be located at Palingswick House. The West London Free School was one of three local schools given the go ahead by the Coalition Government.

However, the school, which is due to launch in September 2011 and has a group of vocal supporters led by writer Toby Young, has so far refused to confirm its proposed location. But not everyone agrees. Christine Blower, General Secretary of the National Union of Teachers, and former teacher at St Edmunds School in Fulham, said: "Groups setting up their own schools irrespective of local planning needs would be a retrograde step that will lead to planning gridlock and social division." Local people

responding on the council website were also sceptical about the school, with comments ranging from "pie in the sky" to "nonsensical profligacy" and claims that opposition to free schools is being ignored.

Palingswick House (PHL) is a registered charity, set up in November 1983 by a consortium of charities working with Hammersmith & Fulham residents and service users. The building was refurbished by PHL with the help of large grants from the ex-GLC, which was abolished by the Conservative government in 1985. The building was designated to be used as a central resource, serviced office space, shared facilities and meeting spaces for the voluntary sector, and particularly for groups requiring a base to work with service users from the borough, now there are 20 groups operating from the building, actively servicing the needs of the local area.

Every year, on average, over 25,000 people visits Palingswick, and access the services and activities that Charities housed in Palingswick



Palingswick House

House deliver. Iraqi Association (IA) is one of the charities servicing mainly local people, last year IA assisted more than 3500 people. As a local service provider, IA is operating on a very prudent budget and offers cost effective value to deliver changes to the lives of more than 2000 local residents.

The eviction is the latest evidence of the brutal impact of local authority budget cuts on

the voluntary sector. Community groups are warning of reductions in essential services ranging from tackling domestic violence to housing support for the vulnerable. This is another blow to the Big Society project in the local borough. Every week, IA is engaging 10 volunteers, they come from different age groups and backgrounds; we induct, train and supervise those volunteers. The council's

eviction decision will harm our volunteers scheme.

Dame Elisabeth Hoodless, one of the charity sector's most respected leaders and an early Big Society supporter, warned the "draconian" cuts risked "destroying volunteering". Dame Elisabeth, head of Community Service Volunteers, the biggest UK charity of its kind, said: "It's about one hand not appreciating what the other's doing."

Adding Value Locally



One of IA workshop sessions

Since its inception in 1987, Iraqi Association (IA) has made a remarkable difference in the quality of life for its local users in the London borough of Hammersmith and Fulham. This includes providing, volunteerism, elderly services, healthy independent living, educational and training guidance, cultural sessions, helping youth and vulnerable to settle, networking activities, offering community-led information in two languages, and reaching hard to reach local community members. Annually more than 2000 local people visit our services. As a non-sectarian independent organisation, we serve everyone free of charge. Many of our charity service

users are qualified, others are eager to take up opportunities to develop new skills so that they can support themselves. On daily basis we deal with different educational institutions, employers and training organisations to provide guidance and support to our clients to settle successfully and make positive contribution to this society. Since December 2010, IA dealt with 336 cases,

this represents data to the end of February 2011. As a small charity, we are determined to continue our services to deliver changes to the lives of local residents; this is despite the harsh funding climate. As one commentator from BBC described IA as "At first glance, the spring scene in the community centre at the end of a cherry blossom-lined street in London could not be more convivial."

We are looking for volunteers



Would you like to join Iraqi Association volunteers team? Do you want to make a difference? Do you have a few hours a week? Email info@iraqiassociation.org

Year	Month	Hardship							
		Advise	Cases	Housing	Health	Employment	Education	General	Total
2010	December	19	18	9	3	1	4	14	68
2011	January	40	25	12	8	2	6	33	126
2011	February	46	38	14	10	8	7	19	142
									336

The 1951 UN Refugee Convention: 60 Years On - Call for papers

13 June 2011, University of Glasgow

The 1951 UN Refugee Convention - 60 Years On is a one-day interdisciplinary postgraduate colloquium which aims to reflect on the current issues surrounding asylum and immigration. Since its adoption 60 years ago the 1951 United Nations Convention relating to the Status of Refugees (the Convention) has provided a legally binding framework for States' responsibilities and obligations regarding the treatment and protection of refugees. Although no State has ever withdrawn from the Convention, in recent years States' interpretations of its meaning and their

responsibilities under it raise questions about their continued commitment to protecting and supporting people fleeing persecution.

GRAMNet PG Network has put out a Call for Papers for an interdisciplinary postgraduate colloquium, which will be held at the University of Glasgow in June, 2011 to mark the Refugee Week. The theme of the Colloquium is: The 1951 UN Refugee Convention - 60 Years On. The deadline for submissions is March 25th, 2011. For more information please contact Katie Farrell /Taulant Guma at gramnet.pg@gmail.com.



Awareness Week 28th March - 3rd April 2011

YPPSS is a network of individuals and organisations who have joined together to promote the rights and safety of unaccompanied young people seeking asylum in the UK. Unaccompanied young people are alone in the UK without parents or family carers, and are in need of safety and protection.

Young People Seeking Safety Week 2011 is

a chance to share the music, film, and photography of young people expressing their experiences of seeking safety in the UK. Around the UK, community groups will host events to bring attention to the issues facing unaccompanied young people.

For more information email:

info@youngpeopleseekingsafety.co.uk

Refugee Council services 'decimated' by cuts

The Refugee Council is facing sweeping reductions to its budgets for frontline services as a result of Home Office spending cuts. Jonathan Ellis, the Refugee Council's policy chief, said this week that the charity's services to beneficiaries were being "decimated" by the scale of the reduction in its Home Office settlement for 2011 and beyond. The charity confirmed that the funding offered by the Home Office from

April this year for its frontline 'One Stop Service' will be no more than £2.02m, which is 61.7 per cent less than for 2010/11.

For its Wraparound Initial Accommodation Services, funding will be no more than £726,000, which is 49.6 per cent lower than for 2010/11.

The contract for its Refugee Integration and Employment Service (RIES) will also end in September 2011.

Leeds City of Sanctuary



A recent report has shown that since 2000, refugees have arrived from 117 countries, the most prominent ones in recent years being Zimbabwe, Iraq, Eritrea, Iran and Afghanistan.

For some, the terms 'asylum seekers' and 'refugees' are sadly loaded with the implications of 'spongers' or 'intruders', which undermine the critical roles these individuals have held in Leeds' history.

Leeds is to become a haven for people whose lives have been shattered by wars and terrors. It is undeniable that the city's modern-day success is built on a history of offering refuge to those who sought asylum and safety.

The move is part of a national initiative in which towns and cities across Britain set up groups to

provide a warm welcome for people driven from their homes by wars and other catastrophes. The Leeds group involves schools, colleges and universities, health providers, all the city's major faith groups, politicians, and people from the world of sport, music and art. "The movement began in Sheffield five years ago, and since then has spread to over 16 cities across UK. It is based around the idea that a society of welcome and inclusiveness is better for everyone.

The City of Sanctuary Movement was founded by the Reverend Dr Inderjit Bhogal. He wishes more organisations to join the Leeds bid, and once people had backed the bid to be a City of Sanctuary, they could hold Leeds council to account and demand that they endorse the movement.

Five lawyers arrested in connection with illegal immigration

Home Office
UK Border Agency

Earlier this month, seven people, including five lawyers, have been arrested as part of a major investigation into a group of solicitors suspected of facilitating illegal immigration into Britain. Around 75 UK Border Agency and police officers were involved in a series of early morning raids on 14 addresses across London on Tuesday. In Eltham, south east London, a 54-year old British woman arrested with a 43-year-old Ghanaian man on suspicion of conspiracy to facilitate illegal immigration to the UK. Five more arrests took place across

London area in Bexley, Camberwell, Abbey Wood, Sydenham and Enfield. The raids follow a lengthy investigation by the agency's London Immigration Crime Team. Six of those arrested were questioned and bailed pending further enquiries, while the Ghanaian man from Eltham was granted immigration bail pending his removal from the UK.

Detective Inspector Karl Amos, from the London Immigration Crime Team, said: "This operation was the result of a complex and extensive investigation. Evidence we have seized will be examined and our enquiries will continue."

IRAQI ASSOCIATION (IA)



The Iraqi Association is a non-profit organisation that exists to enable Iraqis to settle and integrate in this country with rights to express their cultural identities. Our work is aimed at Iraqis, by providing volunteerism, advice, public health support, counselling, training, employment guidance, information

services, and organising cultural events. It is also our mission to raise awareness about relevant events in Iraq and the integration process in this country.

Our Aims and Methods:

We provide the following services to

our clients regardless of their race, ethnic origin, language, gender, and religious or political background.

- Face-to-face support session
- Group empowerment session
- Workshop advice session
- Training session
- Outreach work
- Client-led information