

Heath Lodge Representations

| DATE OBJECTION RECEIVED | DETAILS |
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| 08/06/21 | As a local resident objects to the sale of Heath Lodge and a section of Grangewood Park on community, environmental, and conservation reasons. It is also an act of bad faith to the original intent of Grangewood being sold to the Council. Sympathetic to the financial pressure that Croydon Council is under but cannot understand why it is not possible to raise similar funds by the sale of brownfield sites or modern buildings. Once this part of the Park is lost it will never be financially possible to buy it back. The Park has already lost the original house, the upper lodge and the stables - this is the last chance to provide a space for the local - extremely deprived - community. As an up to now life time Labour supporter I am extremely disappointed. If Labour is in any way serious about supporting working class and ethnically diverse communities (I am from both) then this is certainly not the way to show it. |
| 08/06/21 | Understands that, in spite of vociferous and sustained opposition by the local community, the council intends selling The Lodge to a private buyer. This is yet another example of inept and incompetent management of our assets by the council. The Lodge has been deliberately left for years to fall into a state of disrepair. They are personally aware of a number of approaches made by local people and groups; people who wanted to do something good with The Lodge, to take it over for use as a community asset. Naturally these fell on deaf ears and the building was left to rot, an eyesore to attract flytipping and squatters. Selling it to pocket the money to make up for the massive deficit in the council's budget caused by inept and incompetent management. And so the circle continues. This council is an absolute disgrace. You don't listen to the people you are supposed to serve. You've wasted and stolen our money and now you're selling off our assets in a shambolic attempt to claw some of it back. Shame on you. If not made it clear enough, please treat this email as registering my objection to your sale of The Lodge, a building of historic importance that belongs to the park and should remain part of it. |
| 08/06/21 | Lives just across from the park, and strongly objects to the area of land in Grangewood Park being disposed of by Croydon Council. Knows what this means - developers will come and build ugly glass 'luxury' flats that give nothing back to the community. The park is neglected in general and you should try to take better care of it rather than running it down. Please turn the building into a community space with a café or pub. |

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| 10/06/21 | <p>Like to formally object to the sale of the public land as advertised in the Newshopper. This being my first point as I fail to see why the Newsshopper is a suitable newspaper for the notice, considering that it does not cover Croydon (on the website it lists Bexley, Dartford & Swanley, Bromley, Greenwich, Lewisham, and Southwark as its distribution areas). Surely as it affects local residents (I live down the road from the park), notice should be given where we can access it? Below is the email I sent the last time you gave notice to dispose of the same land, and attached is the response I received from your team. I understand that the council is in administration and needs to raise funds, but over the last year we've seen, now more than ever, the importance of green spaces in our community. Local residents have flocked to Grangewood Park during the lockdown. The Friends of Grangewood Park have organised a pumpkin and picture trails to keep the little ones busy. We have regular volunteering days and the Edible garden has been set up in the sunken garden with funds once again raised by the local people. The community want this park to be wonderful, and I'm asking you to consider wanting the same? The Heath Lodge as a community asset would give the park so much. It could be a community space (scouts could use it, and it could be monetised through private hire for parties etc.) toilets, and even a café. It feels that if the council is allowed to dispose of even a small amount of public land, where will it stop? Not to mention that Grangewood Park has historic significance due to being one of the last remaining parts of the Great North Wood. You listened to the community back in January 2020 and emailed me to say that the land would not be disposed of and that local councillors would consult with the community. As Secretary of the Friends of Grangewood Park, we still very much want this to happen and so I hope you listen now. Over 4,500 people have signed a petition against this public land disposal and I believe Karen Jewitt will be presenting this petition at the next council meeting. "The Council have been made aware of the strong local opinion opposing a sale, and a decision has been made not to sell the Lodge or the additional land. The Council's elected members and officers aim to work with local residents over the coming months to find a viable solution for its future."</p> |
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| 14/06/21 | <p>I am objecting to the proposed sale of Heath Lodge and 195m sq of Grangewood Park to go with it as I think you have acted in an underhand way and reneged on your previous promises and undertakings made. Your authority promised to consult and agree a way forwards with the Friends Of Grangewood Park and this hasn't happened. You have not taken concerns on board but have continued with your agenda regardless of community feeling. It is not the community's fault that Croydon has mismanaged its finances to such an extent; we are and will be paying for all off this for years to come via reduced services and higher council tax for very few services. I also separately want to receive decipherable and definitive proof of ownership of Heath Lodge by Croydon council. Please take this forwards.</p> <p>My points of objection are:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. LBC previously undertook never to sell off any part of its parks and green spaces. This sale is in direct contradiction to what you've said previously. 2. The area in question is part of the last existing fragments of the Great North Wood and therefore has special significance and needs to be protected. The area next to the land proposed to be sold off is an area of ancient woodland and to build adjacent to it jeopardises the future of this special area; it's likely that there is flora and fauna in that area which needs vigorously protecting. What surveys have you undertaken to ascertain that endangered and protected species do not live in the area? 3. As said there has been a complete lack of any consultation with the community and the council have not taken on board any of the Friends Of GP's concerns. I have not seen any notification of a local meeting with residents. Are you planning to hold any? 4. Croydon council is acting in direct contradiction of its own policy of INCREASING the green spaces in the borough by selling off part of one thereby DECREASING green space. 5. There is no definitive proof provided that you even own the land to be sold off. We need proof before this can be even considered further. See request above. 6. Even if it were accepted that the council's debt position influences the decision to sell off Heath Lodge, the amount which would be raised is minuscule compared to the size of the overall debt owed; the relative benefit to the community to retain the Lodge and for the opportunity be given to raise the money to refurbish it with the financial assistance of the council, far outweighs the benefit of potentially reducing the debt by a fraction of a percent. 7. The community is aware that you promised to give a large share if the profits to FOGP to spend on the park. What happened to this promise. Where is the ethics in promising something and then not keeping that promise? How can we have any trust in Croydon Council? <p>Please note that I require a response to the separate questions I've asked on ownership, local meetings to be held and habitat surveys.</p> |
| 14/06/21 | <p>I object to the proposed sale of Heath Lodge and the 195sq m of park land: This is in direct contradiction to London Borough of Croydon's previous position. The area is part of the last existing fragments of the Great North Wood and therefore has special significance and needs to be protected. There is Flora and Fauna that need to be protected in this ancient wood and to further the area next to the land proposed to build adjacent to it jeopardises the future of this special area. There has been a complete lack of any consultation with the community and the council have not taken on board any of the Friends Of GP's concerns. Croydon Council is acting in direct contradiction of its own policy of INCREASING the green spaces in the borough by selling off part of one thereby DECREASING green space. We need proof that The Council own the land before this can even be considered further.</p> <p>The amount that would be raised is minuscule compared to the size of the overall debt owed; the relative benefit to the community to retain the Lodge and for the opportunity be given to raise the money to refurbish it with the financial assistance of the council, far outweighs the benefit of potentially reducing the debt by a fraction of a percent. Please forward me the response to this objection.</p> |

Appendix A

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| 19/06/21 | <p>I am writing to confirm my objection to the proposed sale of section of Grangewood Park. The north of the borough is the more deprived area of the borough and many are barely keeping their head above water, reliant on food banks and charity to simply survive. The ability to have a holiday is only a dream, so local green space is essential for escape from the stress of survival, both from physical and mental aspect, so the fact that the council is planning on disposing of the reducing green space is an appalling slap in the face of those you are supposed to represent. We all know the probability of the asset being purchased by a developer and being used to build homes which will be unaffordable to the locals is quite high, so the ability to use the park will be reduced, yet another way of telling the locals that we are not important. I understand that the council needs to deal with the debt it has, but this debt was not caused by the residents of the borough, in fact, if the council had consulted us prior to acquiring some of the assets purchased, eg Croydon Park Hotel, we would have told you not to buy, so why are you suggesting that we pay yet again, once when our money was used to acquire ultimately valueless assets, a second time by the reduced services at increased costs and now for a third time by the potential disposal of assets which are are used and enjoyed by the residents of the borough.?</p> <p>I trust that you will actually listen to those that voted our councillors into post as very few seem to do so (although my local councillor always listens to us and supports us) and acknowledge my objection.</p> |
| 21/06/21 | <p>I hereby object completely and wholeheartedly to the sale of the Keepers Cottage, garden and proposed additional piece of land. As public land, the council should never have been in a position to sell it. These green spaces are much too important to local people to be reduced/sold off in order to help plug a massive financial hole created by said council. Common sense and decency must prevail and this proposal must not be allowed to go ahead. I speak as a Croydon resident of 33 years and visitor to Grangewood park.</p> |
| 22/06/21 | <p>I would like to register an objection to this sale of a parts of a public asset. Where was this sale advertised?</p> |
| 27/06/21 | <p>As the only park of note within walking distance of my house, I value this place particularly in lockdown. The fact that you would even entertain to sell any of it, is on the verge of deplorable, especially since there does not seem to be any consultation process. There is little point writing this email, as Croydon is an abysmal council and has to do anything to plug the massive debt level (e.g. halving of childrens' services that recently was passed despite strong opposition expressed during this consultation. Anyway, take this email as formal opposition of this plan.</p> |
| 29/06/21 | <p>I wish to object to the proposed sale of Heath Lodge and a parcel of land in Grangewood Park. I believe this is a heritage property and belong to the people of Thornton Heath/Croydon.</p> |

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| 06/07/21 | <p>I am writing as chair of The Friends of Grangewood Park to object to the sale at auction of Heath Lodge and park land. I thought the space being sold with the lodge involved was 195sqm, as you said it was the same piece of land as before but according to the advert it is now 225sqm? Either way our objections are as before when the council previously advertised this process and then did a u-turn under public pressure. The petition against this currently stands at over 4,500, which is a significant number. The only difference with this latest intention of sale is the council's financial position which is of the administration's own making and reengaging on a promise only made in February 2020 reflects extremely badly on the council's trustworthiness. As for the sale of the lodge and land:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Croydon previously undertook never to sell off any part of its parks and green spaces. This is in direct contradiction to the council's previous position. -The area in question is part of the last existing fragments of the Great North Wood and therefore has special significance and needs to be protected. -Further the area next to the land proposed to be sold off is an area of ancient woodland and to build adjacent to it jeopardises the future of this special area; it's likely that there is flora and fauna in that area which needs vigorously protecting. Only in the last week a park user recorded a video of a hedgehog which is on the Red List for British Mammals in this area of the park. Has a wildlife survey been conducted by the council a part of this process? -There has been a complete lack of any consultation with the community and the council have not taken on board any of the Friends concerns as the focus is solely on what can be sold quickly to make money. -There is no definitive proof provided by the Council that the land being sold off belongs to the house and not the park. Sufficient proof should be provided before the land is auctioned as part of the sale of the lodge. The council is relying on recent history when images of the lodge clearly show that originally the garden was the park. Is there a legal document to show the detachment of the garden from the park because presumably you could sell the lodge and land but if the land is part of the park it is still a public right of way? -Even if it were accepted that the council's debt position influences the decision to sell off Heath Lodge, the amount which would be raised is minuscule compared to the size of the overall £120m bail out especially when the council is able to find an extra £10m to loan to Brick by Brick in addition to the £200m plus it has already given a failing company. -Whereas the relative benefit to the community to retain the Lodge and for the opportunity to raise the money to refurbish it with the support of the council, far outweighs the benefit of potentially reducing the debt by a fraction of a percent. -It should also be noted how hypocritical it is for the council to make money from selling a piece of the park instead of ploughing it back in to Grangewood or parks which are suffering because of the council's cuts. The lodge is only in the state it is because the council abandoned it when it could have used it for much needed housing. I would appreciate being able to tell the committee what the money from the sale of Grangewood Park's last historic lodge is intended to be spent on? |
| 08/07/21 | <p>I wish to object to Croydon Council disposing of land and lodge within Grangewood Park. This area of land is within the ancient woodland of The Great North Wood and it should be cherished for present and future generations. So much of Croydon is already built up and any green space should be saved.</p> |