

Going head-to-head in court over new school

By Rachel Bishop

rbishop@london.newsquest.co.uk

The public gallery was full on the first day of the judicial review into Richmond Council's decision process with the Catholic school.

Proceedings began on Thursday, November 15, and continue today, on the case that has been brought against Richmond Council over the decision process into the school planned for the Clifden Road site in Twickenham.

The court heard the application from the British Humanist Association (BHA) and co-claimant the Richmond Inclusive Schools Campaign (Risc)



Day in court: Opponents of the Catholic school plan at the Royal Courts of Justice

Richmond Council has expressed its disappointment that the judicial review is going ahead and leader of the council Lord True had vowed to get back as much of its legal costs from BHA and Risc as possible.

QC David Wolfe is representing BHA and Risc, while QC Clive Lewis is representing the council.

Only BHA's case had been heard by the time this paper went to press.

QC Wolfe argued the difference between the council's need or want for a Catholic school, which is central to the argument.

He said: "The need for Catholic places is identified as being here and now (by the council).

"This is a quite clear recognition of a need for a Catholic school."

QC Wolfe said the leader of the opposition at Richmond Council, Councillor Stephen Knight, had made a statement claiming that Nick Whitfield,

director of Education, told him there was need to move quickly in purchasing the Clifden Road site because there was a need for a new school.

QC Wolfe went on to say that cabinet member for education, Councillor Paul Hodgins, said in a previous council meeting that there was a need for the school.

However, Justice Sales, who is judging the case, argued about the intent of Coun Hodgins' words.

He said: "Perhaps he is saying it would be a good idea. One can talk in general terms."

The case was heard at the Royal Courts of Justice in London on November 15 and continues today. A decision is not expected for several weeks.

Lord True previously said: "The council will defend our local decision against legal action confidently and vigorously, seeking to recoup any costs.

"Every penny spent on lawyers would be money lost to spend on the education of all young people in the borough."

However, both sides have seen their potential claim for costs capped, so the council will spend taxpayers' money to contest the appeal.

In May, the council's cabinet agreed that the Clifden Road site should be used for new a Catholic primary and secondary school.

Following this decision, BHA and Risc applied for a judicial review to look into whether the council acted lawfully when it considered and approved the Diocese of Westminster's proposals.

What BHA and Risc say

The BHA and Risc claimed the council failed to comply with new legislation that requires a local authority to invite proposals for an academy if it thought that a new school is needed in the area.

This clause is under the Education and Inspections Act 2006.

Both the groups believed the council did not do this because the Catholic diocese wanted the secondary and primary schools to select almost 100 per cent of their pupils on religious grounds, while free schools can only select up to 50 per cent of pupils on the basis of religion.

Vandals trash new gardens

"Mindless hooligans" have torn up flower beds and strewn them around the new Diamond Jubilee Gardens, in what has been described as "abhorrent" behaviour.

Residents and councillors have expressed outrage at the vandalism, which is the first of its kind since the gardens were officially opened by Princess Alexandra in June this year.

The gardens, located in a prime spot overlooking the Thames, were opened to the public following six months of intensive on-site work to transform the former Twickenham Lido, after 30 years of neglect.

Councillor Virginia Morris, Richmond Council's cabinet member for environment,

said: "This shocking behaviour from these individuals is abhorrent, and it's extremely sad that all the hard work and time which was invested into creating these lovely gardens for the community has been spoiled in such a needless way."

The contractor responsible for maintaining the gardens has been to the site to assess what can be salvaged from the damage, and will return later in the week to carry out the necessary works to return the gardens to their original appearance.

The council urge anyone who has any information about this incident to come forward and contact the council's parks team on parks@richmond.gov.uk.



Damaged: Flower beds were ripped-up at the new Diamond Jubilee Gardens in Twickenham Riverside

What the council says

Richmond Council believes it did act accordingly with the law and that it approved proposals for two new voluntary aided schools published by the Diocese of Westminster under Section 11(1A) of the Education and Inspections Act 2006.

The Secretary of State for Education has now applied to take part in the judicial proceedings as an interested party.

Michale Gove has stated that his view is that under the new legislation the local authority is not under a duty to invite proposals for an academy before lawfully being able to approve the proposal.

kindle
wood-burning stoves
www.kindlestoves.co.uk

natural energy at the heart of your home

- Approved for Smoke Control Areas
- Full Supply and Installation Service
- High Efficiency, Cleanburn Stove Specialist
- Fully HETAS Approved

Visit our showroom

HETAS **CLEARVIEW STOVES** **morsø**

Abacadabra
Sound & Light Services
020 8893 3313 304 Nelson Road - Whiteley - Middlesex - TW2 7SR www.abakadabra.co.uk

BOOK NOW FOR XMAS & GET 10% OFF ANY HIRE!

Home Party iPod Systems - from just £40.00 per night

iPod Speaker
iPod Speaker System: Just plug your iPod in the back and away you go. Ideal for house parties. Mic supplied. Just £40 per night!

Home Party System
Play music straight from your iPod or laptop. System comes with speakers and microphone and is suitable for up to 10 people. Just £60 per night!

Add any two lights from our £10 range for just £15 extra!

CD/iPod DIY Disco Systems - from £75.00 per night

Play music straight from your CD's iPod or laptop. System comes complete with 2 speakers and a mic. Suitable for parties for up to 10 people. Everything you need to get your party started!

Add any 3 lights from our £10 range for just £20 extra!

Larger systems available starting from just £90.00 per night

Book and pay for your hire by 201112 to obtain your 10% discount! Booking code "xmas-xmas"

020 8893 3313

Sales - Hire - Service - Installation - Design

WINDOW REPAIRS TO DOUBLE GLAZING

- Misted/broken sealed units
- Handles for windows and doors
- Window hinges and stays
- Patio doors wheels and tracks
- All types of locks

DON'T REPLACE! REPAIR!

NO CALL OUT CHARGE

- Open 7 days a week
- Cut this leaflet out

you might need it one day
FOR FREE ESTIMATE PHONE

AS GOOD AS NEW
020 8641 5036