

no cuts!



Feb
2011

Workers' and community **action** together for **better** jobs and services

Council cuts: No excuses!

- **Mayor Pipe: you can't "fight the cuts" and make them at the same time!**
- **Join the march on Saturday Feb 19th**

Hackney Mayor Jules Pipe has announced that he plans to "fight the cuts" - by cutting 9% from council budgets. Pipe admits that the se cuts will have a terrible effect on Hackney.

Inside we explain what the council would have to do to refuse the Tory cuts, and take a closer look at Mayor Pipe's defence of his plan.

In the end, there is no acceptable way to cut from one of the least well-off communities in the country. What use is it to us for Mayor Pipe to go on TV saying how terrible the cuts are, and meanwhile set about slashing the jobs and services on which this community depends?

So far, only students have really shown the fighting spirit we're going to need to beat back attacks on our living standards—see the back page for our report. But we can do it. We might be a relatively poor borough in terms of money,



Footage of Hackney students protesting was shown around the world. Hundreds walked out of colleges and 6th forms in November—see back page for our report

but we are rich in community.

That community is what is under attack, but is also our best means of defence. That's why we encourage you to contact your councillors and tell them there's no excuse for making cuts.

Then, join our demonstration on Saturday 19 February. Against not just council cuts, but cuts to welfare, health, housing, education—**join us on Feb 19th!**

Hackney
**MARCH
AGAINST
THE CUTS**
Saturday 19 February

Gather 12noon, corner of Stoke Newington High St and Somerford Grove—march to Town Hall and arrive at 2pm.

Organise locally to beat cuts!

Hackney Alliance to Defend Public Services believes we need to get seriously organised. That's why we're encouraging people to form local groups in each of the borough's 19 wards. We've got going already:

Stoke Newington: stokeyagainstthecuts@gmail.com. Meet to lobby Councillors, 5 Feb, 10am, Yorkshire Grove Estate Community Hall, Gunstor Rd.

Chatham (Homerton): chathamagainstcuts@gmail.com. Public meeting, 12 February, 1:30pm Homerton Library.

Brownswood: regular meetings, email Tom: hitchin46@talktalk.net

Contact hackneyalliance@hotmail.co.uk to connect with concerned Hackney Residents near you!



NHS is not protected

It has become clear that the ConDem's promise to maintain funding for the NHS is a lie. While they argue that the health budget is protected, they are demanding £20 billion in "efficiency savings" over the next four years.

Even the Tory chair of the Health Select Committee, Stephen Dorrell, was shocked: "There is no precedent for efficiency gain on this scale in the history of the NHS, nor has any precedent yet been found of any healthcare system anywhere in the world doing anything similar."

What this means is that hospital wards will be closed, services will be cut and jobs will be lost both in hospitals and community health services.

The *Royal College of Nursing* estimates that the number of jobs at risk in the NHS is around 27,000, warning that this will lead to rising waiting lists and a demoralised workforce.

While we don't yet know the details of what this will mean in Hackney, we do know that management at Homerton Hospital has announced £15 million cuts

over the next year.

When **Homerton Hospital** made cuts of £7 million, it closed a ward closed and made 100 jobs redundant, leaving the remaining staff struggling to meet the gap.

NHS cuts will also affect other services. **City and Hackney Primary Care Trust** funds a number of voluntary sector projects. While it has agreed to roll over most contracts for 2011-12, these are typically cut by 10% or 20%, reducing hours and services.

These cuts come on top of 'efficiency savings which are already translating into lay-offs and cuts in provision. For example, Age Concern's Coldline service, which deals with fuel poverty among older people, has been decommissioned, to be replaced by a less comprehensive service next year.

Moreover, funding cuts are combined with an assault on the very basis of the NHS.

A government directive to hand over the vast majority of the NHS budget to GPs will open up the NHS to private profit-making companies and undermine a

national system of healthcare.

What's more, it is estimated that these "reforms" will cost between £1.9 billion and £3 billion – and this at a time when the government is forcing savings throughout the NHS.

The pace of these reforms is breathtaking, and senior figures across the health service have warned this will have disastrous consequences.

The Government is out to dismantle the NHS and go down the road of the USA where health is a profit-making business not a needs-based service.

None of this is necessary. A publicly run NHS is the most efficient way to ensure health care for all. And just such an NHS was created in post-war Britain at a time when UK debt was proportionally far greater than it is today.

Resistance both locally and nationally, from health unions and the public is crucial to defend the health services we all rely on.

By some Hackney health workers

Can councillors refuse cuts?

Yes.

How?

By voting against a budget which cuts jobs and services—which would mean spending more than the government gives them.

What would happen then?

The Mayor would have to come up with a plan to run the council without making cuts.

And what if the Mayor put forward a budget without cuts?

First of all, it would send a shock-wave through British politics, perhaps inspiring other councils to do likewise, and threatening the cuts agenda. It would show that the cuts are inconsistent with local democracy.

And then central government would step in?

Possibly. It would be such a big deal for central government to take over a local council that they wouldn't do it readily. This may encourage them to make concessions—as it did in Liverpool in the early 1980s, Clay Cross in the 1970s, and nearby Poplar in the 1920s.

They may be able to do this for one council, but they certainly can't do it for a great number. Council workers could refuse orders from Tory appointees.

But if Hackney Labour makes the cuts, won't they at least reflect "the priorities of residents"?

It is hypocritical of Pipe to talk about the "priorities of residents"

when taking home a £75,000 salary. Are salaries like this the "priorities of residents"?

Are the priorities of residents compatible with Pipe's planned cuts at all? The trouble is, the Mayor is keeping his cards close to his chest: there hasn't been a public debate over what Pipe's cuts would mean, because rather than discuss his plans, he's intending to spring them on us as a done deal. We know that Decent Homes works will be badly hit, but not much more.

The Mayor claims to be following our priorities – but isn't interested in debating publicly whether those priorities are his salary, youth services—or taking a stand against the government.

Is there a risk that Tory appointees would freeze council spending, putting vulnerable residents at risk?

This is scare-mongering. They would still have to provide statutory services, and follow employment law in the same way as Pipe. Wages and services couldn't simply stop.

The Mayor claims that the best way to fight cuts is to fight for the election of a Labour government?

That's not much good for those of us who have to actually live through the next four years and already live in an overwhelmingly Labour-voting borough.

How different would it have been under Labour?

Different, but not as much as the

Mayor likes to imply. The ConDem cuts are worth £81 billion. In his pre-Budget report, Labour chancellor Alistair Darling proposed cuts of £73bn: 90% of the coalition cuts. Current shadow Chancellor Ed Balls "fully endorsed" that plan.

The Browne Review, which raised university tuition fees, was commissioned by Labour.

On plans to force claimants to work for free, former Labour minister James Purnell says "Labour wanted these welfare reforms too". Incoming Tory ministers found that Labour had already been drawing up plans to cut the housing benefit cap, which puts many at risk of eviction next year, including in Hackney.

Labour has refused to outline a comprehensive alternative not saying what cuts they would make on a national level.

If there's to be a real alternative to the ConDem cuts, we believe that it needs to be better than the one offered by Darling, Balls, and Pipe.

MARCH FOR THE ALTERNATIVE:
JOBS • GROWTH • JUSTICE

SATURDAY 26 MARCH 2011
Assemble at 11am on Victoria Embankment, between Temple Place and Blackfriars, to march to a rally in Hyde Park

Students show the way!

Students in Hackney have expressed anger at increases in tuition fees and cuts to Educational Maintenance Allowance.

That anger came to Hackney on 30 November 2010, the second day of mass action, which followed the gigantic demonstration and occupation of Millbank Tower the previous week.

Some **70 BSix students** walked out at 11am. They started marching down Upper Clapton Road. Then, to cheers of delight, they were joined by a **huge contingent from Mossbourne Academy**, who had marched out of school despite threats of discipline from the head teacher. One of their home-made placards read 'Kill Eton'.

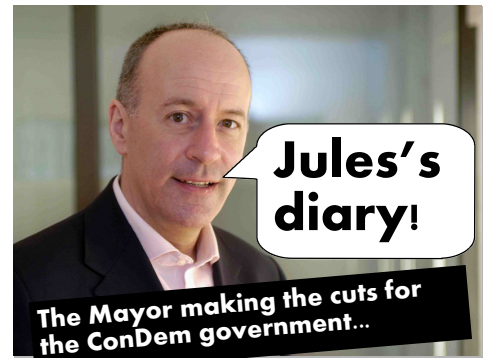
So now it was some 150 school students confidently marching to the Town Hall, chanting slogans, waving placards and banners. The reception from passing motorists and

pedestrians was terrific. The student action hit a nerve of support from ordinary people, putting a lie to the media slur that student protest was all about defending middle class privilege.

The students then marched round the Town Hall. The idea was to show a link with the town hall and Learning Trust employees who face massive cuts of their own. They then piled onto buses to get down to Trafalgar Square.

A large number of students also walked out of Stoke Newington school. Many if not most 6F students went down to all demos. Lots of them were kettled and angry about how they were treated, but went back to join further protests.

These are working-class students, from different communities, united in their rejection of what the government is doing to their future.



Hackney public meeting
Wednesday 10 February
 7.30pm at the Round Chapel, Lower Clapton Road. With trade union leader Bob Crow.

March against cuts in Hackney
Saturday 19 February
 Meet 12 noon at junction of Stoke Newington High Street and Somerford Grove, march to Hackney Town Hall arriving at 2pm

Hackney organising meetings
Tuesday 8 and 22 Feb, and Tuesday 8 and 22 March
 7pm, at the MOTH Club—see below for map and info.

Hackney Alliance is supported by Hackney Unison (Local Government), Hackney Unison (Homerton Hospital), Day-Mer, Refugee Workers' Cultural Association (Gik Der), Hackney Teachers Alliance (NUT), Hackney PCS, Hackney Keep Our NHS Public, Friends of Hackney Nurseries, Hackney Anti-Academies Alliance, Hackney Trades Union Council, Hackney Housing Group, Hackney Stop the War—representing thousands of residents and workers. **Join us!**

www.hackneyalliance.wordpress.com

For Turkish see hackneyalliance.wordpress.com/turkiye-turkish/



Got a story? Want to get involved?

- Call Glyn on 07810 545838
- email hackneyalliance@hotmail.co.uk
- Come to our meetings—see above right, or get in touch for ward or estate groups!
- *Need a crèche or help with childcare so you can come? Contact us!*

