

## BOROUGH

# Ex housing boss to be quizzed on estate

## Former councillor to attend meeting on security funds

By John Prendergast

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**FORMER HOUSING** chief Kim Humphreys will be quizzed next week about how security work on a Bermondsey estate has been left unfinished.

Upgrade work on the Four Squares Estate has been completed on two out of four blocks, but half of the tenants are now being told that the cash is no longer there to complete work.

Around £8million was set aside to do the work, but halfway through the project tools were downed when it became apparent only £1.5million was left in the kitty. Former Leader of the Council, Nick Stanton, stated in a letter to the 'News' at the time that works had stopped due to the impending elections, and did not continue after the Lib Dem/Tory coalition was ousted from power last May.

Questions are still left unanswered about whether that cash is still available, or has been allocated elsewhere, or if money will be found to complete work. A housing scrutiny committee meeting next Tuesday hopes to shed some light on the situation.

Mr. Humphreys oversaw the work in his previous role, and although he has relinquished that post and his position as a Southwark councillor, he has agreed to return to help uncover the answers tenants are seeking.

Cllr Gavin Edwards, chair of the housing and community safety scrutiny committee, said: "We will be looking into how all of this money was allocated, and why some of the security work has not been done."

"It is good of Kim Humphreys to come back, as he is under no obligation to do so. He was the political lead at the time



Former housing chief Kim Humphreys

and we want to know if the advice he was given was correct, and we shall be asking similar questions to officers as well."

Anood Al-Samerai, the Lib Dem member for the Riverside ward which encompasses the Four Squares, told the 'News' she had requested to be part of the scrutiny process.

She added: "I am delighted that residents and I will have the chance to pull apart Labour's spin and misinformation at next week's scrutiny meeting. Labour must accept that they have to complete these security works for local residents."

Sheila Fairfield, vice-chair of the Four Squares tenants' and residents' association, said: "We still don't really know what is going to happen. We were told there was £1.5million left, but we don't know if that is still there or not. We just want to know what they are going to do. Are they going to get more money from somewhere and do the rest of the job? One thing we don't want to happen is for the rest of the estate to get a cheap job; I don't see the point of that, as they should get the work everyone else has."

The housing and community safety scrutiny sub-committee meeting takes place at Southwark Town Hall next Tuesday at 7pm.



The Four Squares Estate

# Southwark flu figures stay low despite rise across the capital

By Jim Lucas

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**FLU CASES** may be on the rise in London and across the country, but statistics show that the number of reported instances of such diseases in Southwark was among the lowest in the capital over Christmas.

Health Protection Agency figures show that Southwark Primary Care

Trust declared 39 cases of 'flu-type illnesses' – which includes H1N1, formerly known as swine flu – during the week commencing December 20.

That gives the borough a rate of 42.1 cases per 100,000 people – the third-lowest figure of London's 31 PCTs – with only Havering and Waltham Forest reporting a lower flu rate.

The figure is less than the expected level for this time of year, 70 cases per 100,000 people, and well below

the current national average of 124 cases per 100,000.

Brent PCT currently has the highest level of reported cases of influenza in London, with 136.9 cases per 100,000 during that week.

NHS bosses have said that they expect instances of flu to rise over the next few weeks as children return to school, and have this week begun their 'Catch It, Kill It, Bin It' awareness campaign.



## Lost bard's play at Union

Arts  
Page 27



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