

Answer to demand is to build more faith schools not fewer

Sir – At first sight the letter: “Not anti-religious, but we want fairness” appears to be completely bizarre because it seems to be in direct contradiction to several years of sustained “anti-faith school” lobbying by Risc, et al, but in light of the article “In-demand schools: the gospel truth” in the Daily Telegraph this week, then this “anti-faith school” perception is due

simply to the misguided focus upon privilege by Risc.

To paraphrase this DT article, today, while millions fewer people admit to having a religion, and yet faith schools are so grossly over-subscribed that studying in a faith school has by default become “a privilege”.

Therefore this unnecessary bottleneck is making our educational system

dysfunctional, because the selection process is naturally weighted in favour of the faithful and means those of little or no faith are served last.

However, the most significant factor is that because faith schools tend to outperform non-faith schools, because most parents want the best available schooling for their children then both faith and non-faith parents

want their children to be taught in faith schools, but with too few faith schools, the right of choice becomes changed into a privilege, not because it is faith school, but because too many apply for limited places.

Therefore the way to return the right of free choice of school to every child is (a) not by forcing the existing faith schools to take ever-increasing quotas of

non-faith children which will inevitably destroy the ethos (that indefinable something) which creates above-average schools, but (b) by the creation of more faith schools, which will automatically make more school places available for both faith and non-faith pupils.

FRANK JOHN SNELLING
Teddington

Stop safety

Sir – The letter from Gemma Stockley and Lord True (Letters, March 21) about the new position of the bus stop for the 209 bus at Mortlake terminus was very long indeed. Presumably, it had to be long enough to cushion the snide attack on us within the letter for having the audacity to campaign on an issue that has been brought to us by local residents.

The Conservative position on the bus stop could instead have been summed up in one sentence. Think of all the other letters that could have been printed last week if they had just said, ‘We agree with Transport for London about the new stop and think it is safe to cross the road there’.

Our position is that we do not, and it is not. And we will continue to work with residents to campaign for a more sensible alternative.

MICHAEL DINGEMANS,
HONG LING DYER, ANTON
MCNULTY-HOWARD
Liberal Democrats
Mortlake and Barnes
Common ward

Profits first

Sir – The soaring price of energy is affecting everyone, and the hardest hit are the poorest, who cannot afford to turn on their heating.

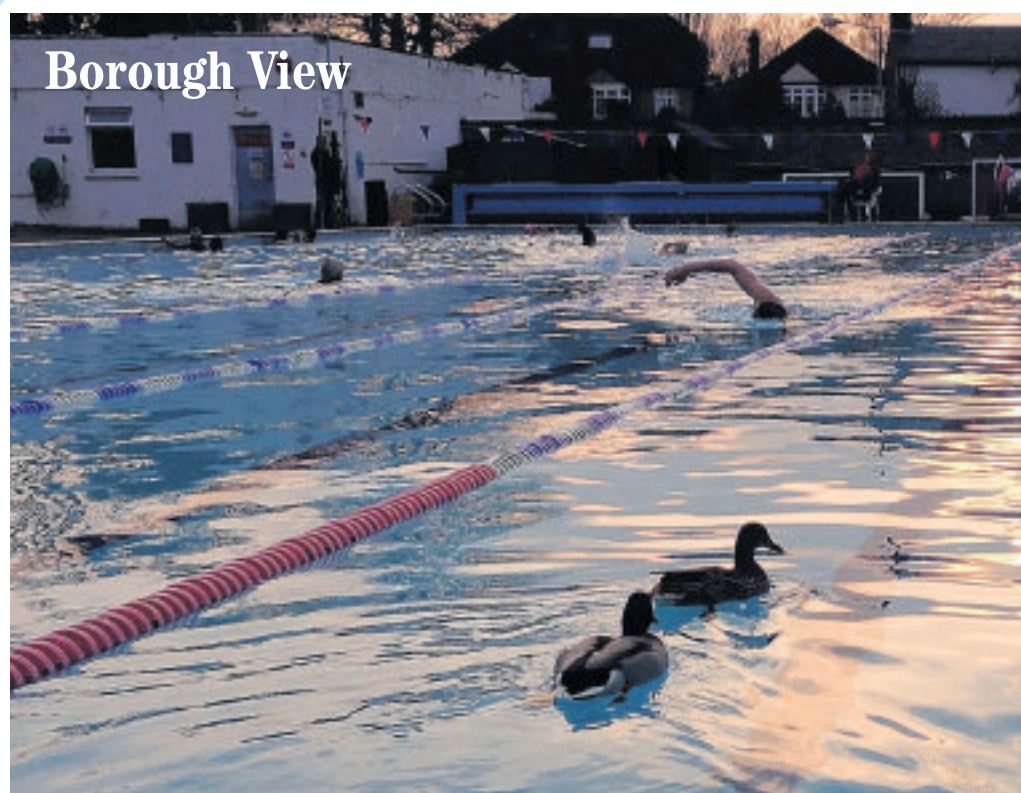
If we continue to rely on fossil fuels, bills are likely to rise in the long term as coal, oil and gas become more expensive and renewable technology gets cheaper. Fossil fuels are also driving climate change and polluting people’s land, especially in developing countries.

Yet the big UK banks continue to pour billions of pounds into new coal, oil and gas projects around the world, and the Government is doing nothing to stop them.

Perhaps this is not surprising: research by the World Development Movement shows that a third of ministers in the coalition Government have personal links to either the big fossil fuel companies or the finance companies that bankroll them.

We need a Government that takes both fuel poverty and climate change seriously, not one that puts the profits of big companies before all else.

PERRY LUTZ
TW12



Niall Boyle got this charming shot of ducks relaxing in the slow lane on a Friday after work at Hampton Pool. If you have a picture you would like published in our weekly Borough View slot, email it to lettersrtt@london.newsquest.co.uk.

Need home

Sir – I am concerned about the lack of serious debate on the homes we need.

Many people are finding it really hard to get on the housing ladder or are struggling with increasing rents. But our community does not seem to be doing much about it.

The two new developments around the station have no affordable housing on them. Surely we could have got some for local key workers or to help the next generation stay in the area?

Instead at Brewery Wharf we are creating a gated community. Is that what we want?

Please sign the petition for more of the right homes, in the right place, at the right price at yestohomes.co.uk.

KEVIN JONES
TW2

Solution or photo op?

Sir – With local elections just eight weeks away, it seems Councillor Coombs has woken up to the concerns of residents regarding congestion and road safety at the junction of Hospital Bridge Road, Powder Mill Lane and Percy Road.

Given that the junction was only recently reconfigured by the council and had previously suffered problems with congestion even before the redesign of the junction, we would like to

put these questions to Coun Coombs.

Did he raise any concerns during the design phase? When did he first discover that there was an issue with congestion following the re-configuration? Has he taken any previous action prior to his press release and photo opportunity last week?

CRAIG OWEN, RHONDA
EVANS and ROB NEWBERRY
Labour party candidates
for Heathfield

What makes a real cut?

Sir – The latest Lib Dem leaflet claims that, if elected, the Lib Dems would cut council tax in real terms. That sounds good until you realise what it actually means.

Any council tax increase by less than inflation is a real terms cut so the leaflet should read “We’d raise council tax by up to 1.5 per cent”.

In contrast, the Conservative council has frozen council tax for the entire four

years of their term.

They promise to freeze it for at least two more years if re-elected. Given their record it seems fair to take them at their word.

Clearly the Liberals believe Richmond residents are idiots. On May 22 I very much hope Richmond residents prove them wrong.

KAT ROLINSON
Teddington

High tides at Richmond Bridge

Hammersmith Bridge 26 minutes earlier; Kew Bridge 12 minutes earlier

	time	ht.m	time	ht.m
Friday	0619	7.0	1841	6.8
Saturday	0657	6.7	1915	6.5
Sunday	0737	6.4	1951	6.1
Monday	0822	6.0	2036	5.8
Tuesday	0920	5.8	2138	5.6
Wednesday	1038	5.6	2305	5.5
Thursday	1155	5.8		
Friday	0026	5.8	1303	6.1

National Severe Weather Warning Service 01344 856264.
Floodline 0845 9881188.

The Port of London Authority (PLA), Bakers' Hall, 7 Harp Lane, London EC3R 6LB.
020 7743 7900, portoflondon.co.uk. Environment Agency floodline information
environment-agency.gov.uk/floodwarning.