

Criticism of free school plans

Sir – I am writing with reference to the Turing House School. Recently I looked at the website and saw that it is a five form entry, 11 to 18 secondary school. All places have been allocated for September 2015.

I had not read in the local paper that Richmond was going to be short of 150 places for September 2015 and so this may mean that other schools have spare places and a loss of income.

Many primary school children go on to private schools and so looking at numbers in year 6 in the borough does

not give an accurate number of pupils seeking places in Richmond state schools.

Also a new state secondary school is due to open in 2017 on the Richmond College site.

Free schools are set up by religious groups or by parents who do not like the schools that are on offer.

The school is being set up by Twickenham parents who presumably do not want their children to go to Twickenham Academy which, according to Ofsted, “requires improvement”.

I have great difficulty in

getting my head around a system that allows parents to set up a school according to their beliefs and then get the taxpayer to pay for it.

The location of schools should be planned by a governmental body (not necessarily by a local education authority).

They should only be set up in areas where there is a shortage of places. Teddington already has a large, successful comprehensive.

If this school is going to be permanently located on the Imperial College site it will be near a very large primary

school. Of course, there will be an impact on traffic in the area. The catchment area of Turing House school is the Fulwell area.

It is one thing for a group of parents to house a school in a redundant building that needs an occupier and little money spent on it.

It is another thing for taxpayers to pay for a new school on very expensive land. The school is opening temporarily in an office building in Teddington.

Money is presently being spent on this building to turn it into a school. I note in RTT

on May 8 that the headteacher used the phrase “would be an unreasonable use of public expenditure” in relation to not accepting a pupil with special needs to the proposed school. I would like to say that spending money on a building for temporary use is an unacceptable use of taxpayers’ money. I urge readers to look at the Turing House website and also Wikipedia on the Bristol Free school that is run by the same organisation, RET.

JACKIE TERRY
Teddington

Ode to Cable

Sir – Shock, horror, amazement

*Who would have thought it?
Cable was not the winner
Even though he's no sinner*

*Twickenham voters said no more
And poor old Vince was out the door
Which must have hurt to the core*

*Politics can be so cruel
Even when you're not taken for a fool*

*Will he return? I'm not sure
But a lot of residents want more*

*In his place we have Tania, a Tory
Now that's going to be an interesting story*

*In her victory she did not wallow
For Vince is a hard act to follow*

*She's a doctor, so used to pressure
And ready to take our measure*

*Facing her is quite a hill
But there's always a pill*

*But let's wish her well
For us, it's time to dwell*

*Time to tighten our belts again
As they say: no pain, no gain*

*Too late to change our mind
Steady as we go and nose to the grind*

*There's five more years to wait
By which time some of us will be at the Pearly Gate*

*As for Cameron, we'll carry on calling him Dave until it's time to say goodbye and wave
And as for a future coalition...*

Thank God there's no chance of it becoming a tradition

JO ANTHONY JAFRATO
Twickenham TW11

Bad decision

Sir – It may seem that it is no one else's business, but the good people of Richmond, so this letter may seem impertinent.

However, I feel it important to express the huge disquiet that I, and I believe thousands of others, feel at the decision made on May 7 to unseat Vince Cable as your Member of Parliament.

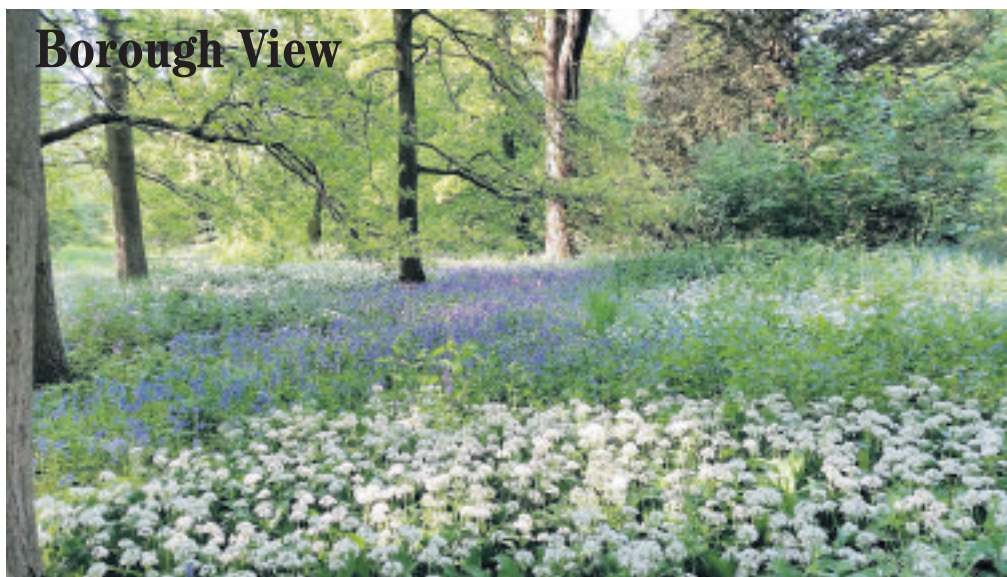
I am afraid, Richmond folk, not only have you shot yourselves in the foot, but you have also done a huge disservice to the country.

The reasons for the majority of you voting Conservative are, for me, very questionable and frankly utterly selfish.

You have deprived the House of Commons of a wise man of great integrity, who has served the Conservative led coalition and the country as a good Business Secretary.

He could now have had a valuable role in opposition to what is likely to be a particularly mean-minded and right wing Government. I am sorry Richmond, but shame on you. You and the country will rue your decision for the next five years. I hope you all feel proud of yourselves.

REC CHRIS PETTET
Hampshire



Wild garlic and bluebells in beautiful bloom, as captured by Sophie Thorne. If you have a picture you would like published in our weekly Borough View slot, email it to lettersrtt@london.newsquest.co.uk.

'Undemocratic first-past-the-post system' did for Vince

Sir – I hope that whatever people wanted to achieve nationally it was worth losing a good, hard working man who cares hugely about Twickenham.

He was always there for us locally attending meetings

and fighting for the issues that matter to the area despite the calls on his time from Westminster.

I have also met so many people who found their personal struggles of equal importance to him as well.

Vince Cable is a huge loss for the area.

The only positive to keeping this undemocratic first-past-the-post system was that it supported and encouraged the idea of locally engaged MPs. Yet today

Twickenham sees the loss of one of the most locally invested people an area could ask for.

Tragic on all counts.

JO ANTHONY JAFRATO
Twickenham TW11

Finding a purpose in our lives so we can enjoy journey

THE GOD SPOT

By Paul van Essen
greaterlife.org.uk

What is it that makes daily life enjoyable?

Are there one or two things that make us feel, despite the challenges, that this “journey of life” is really worthwhile?

I am sure there are some aspect of the answer to this

that vary from person to person, but over the years I have found two biggies – two things that stand head and shoulders above the rest.

The first is a sense of purpose.

The second is meaningful relationships.

A sense of purpose means that you have the innate feeling that you are here on the Earth to do something – to positively contribute to

people or to this world. That is a very precious thing.

There is not a course on it in our schools, but I am part of a “breed” of churches that are seeking to get it across to people everywhere.

Sometimes we find the sad situation where people that have worked hard all their lives and then retire only to pass on from this life just a short time after their

retirement. Why?

It is not that physical health deteriorates that quickly. It is most often that the person does not feel they have any real purpose any more.

Truth is no one else can find a “sense of purpose” for you. But we can help. I think God is looking for churches that breathe this sense of purpose in life into people. Life is too short to not enjoy the journey.

High tides at Richmond Bridge

Hammersmith Bridge 26 minutes earlier; Kew Bridge 12 minutes earlier

	time	ht.m	time	ht.m
Friday	0026	6.4	1311	6.8
Saturday	0131	6.7	1410	7.0
Sunday	0226	6.9	1500	7.1
Monday	0314	7.0	1545	7.2
Tuesday	0358	7.2	1627	7.2
Wednesday	0442	7.3	1708	7.2
Thursday	0525	7.2	1747	7.0
Friday	0608	7.0	1825	6.8

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.