

Holborn – Community Exploring The Issue

Background

Holborn is an area of central London, currently administered by the Borough of Camden. To better meet the needs of its residents, the area is now in the process of establishing a neighbourhood forum, wanting to trigger a Community Governance Review once the neighbourhood plan referendum has concluded. Campaign leaders have organised multiple community meetings in the recent months, where residents had a chance to voice their concerns and to express their views about the future of their community.

Why A Council Is Wanted

Community organizers believe that a Holborn Community Council will improve local democracy, giving residents more powers in determining what is right for their area. A community council would also allow the Holborn community to better administer its assets and tailor services to meet its needs, improving the socio-economic wellbeing of its residents. Further goals for a community council will be shaped during the process of setting up a neighbourhood plan when residents and other stakeholders will have a chance to express their views on the changes needed in their community.

Progress With Campaign To Date

Community organizers have succeeded in building a team of volunteers and holding public meetings to inform and consult residents. Having received a grant from the National Association of Local Councils, community organizers want to hold additional public meetings to spread the word, making sure that the right information is available to people. Residents have already expressed their preference for creating a community council not only during the public meetings but also through nearly 200 listenings, however as a neighbourhood plan is a pressing issue for the Holborn community, they decided to establish a neighbourhood forum first, triggering a Community Governance Review after the neighbourhood plan referendum.

Learning From The Campaign

With the help of volunteers and public meetings, the word about a Holborn community council continues to spread in the local community. Although the first public meeting had a modest attendance, the number of attendees has been growing since. Nevertheless, although an increasing number of residents have shown their support towards the creation of a community council, community organizers have expressed their concern about the low number of people wanting to get involved in setting up the campaign. They hope that the public meetings held in the months to follow will attract a higher number of volunteers.

Campaign Lessons To Share With Others

Setting up a community council is a long-term project. As the Holborn campaign has shown, it takes a lot of dedication and hard work to gain the necessary support from the local community. Therefore, you need to pace your campaign based on the resources and the support that are available to you locally. Nevertheless, there are some things that have proven effective in speeding up the process, which Holborn community organizers have applied, such as having an experienced facilitator at public meetings. Offering to cover travel expenses for volunteers also proved to be an effective way of attracting more individuals in helping with the consultation.