

## Pinkham Way Alliance

### Press Release - May 25 2011 for immediate release

#### North London Waste Authority's newsletter is 'cynical attempt to hoodwink local residents'.

Earlier this month the NLWA sent a newsletter to 18,000 homes in Enfield, Barnet and Haringey, ostensibly to correct any 'misunderstanding' about its intended plans for a 300,000 tonne a year waste treatment plant on the site of Pinkham Wood, on the Colney Hatch Lane/North Circular road junction.

Far from easing people's fears, it has made them angry and fearful for their future wellbeing because of its lack of transparency and patronising tone.

The NLWA bought the land at Pinkham Way in 2009, but it was only in February of this year, nearly two and a half years later, that local people first heard about their plans, which if carried out, will be a catastrophe for residents and businesses in the Friern Barnet/Muswell Hill area and beyond.

Chair of the Pinkham Way Alliance Bidesh Sarkar said:

'The NLWA has constantly said that we misunderstand what they are doing. The problem is we know all too well what they are up to, and we are not going to stand for it.

'Their latest missive has infuriated people by showing a timeline of previous 'opportunities' when local people could have had their say, dating back to March 2008. Well, as far as we can tell, Pinkham Wood didn't appear on anybody's' list of potential sites until well after that date, so how could we have been consulted about it? The first any of us knew about this dangerous plan was in February, when there was an exhibition at a local school, which was a complete bolt from the blue.

'The Pinkham Way Alliance is mobilising local people to fight this scheme so that we can save our way of life for our children and their children.'

Among the misleading information in the NLWA's newsletter listed by Mr Sarkar are:

- Continuing insistence on euphemistically calling the proposed chimney a 'stack'. It's not a 'stack', it's **a chimney that could be 150 or more feet tall** (46 to 53m). That is the same size as a large electricity pylon. Why is the NLWA planning a chimney? Because of the smells and the gases NLWA knows it will emit. There are around 10,000 homes within a one kilometre radius of Pinkham Wood.
- Failure to answer the question about whether the proposed site, at 300,000 tonnes a year, will be one of the biggest in Europe. A recent **Freedom of Information Act** request by the Pinkham Way Alliance has forced the NLWA to concede that **there are only two bigger sites in Europe** – one in Leyland, Lancashire (marginally bigger at 305,000 tonnes), the other in Madrid (480,000 tonnes). **Residents near the (Farington) Leyland site have been complaining for months about the stench coming from the site.** (Two bigger sites have been granted planning permissions in the UK – but they are in the middle of a 25 hectare disused airfield in Rivenhall in Essex.)
- The NLWA's traffic chart looks nonsensical. **Suggesting that the vehicular traffic coming into the site neatly coincides with 'quiet times' on the North Circular road looks just too convenient to believe.** Who will be able to enforce this – certainly not the local residents! What is to stop more vehicles coming during rush hour – which lasts for about three hours at each end of the working day – or during the middle of the night?
- The NLWA told the Pinkham Way Alliance that vehicles from four boroughs would be using the site, but the newsletter only mentions Barnet, Enfield and Haringey – there is no mention of (west) Camden.
- **The notion that the site is 'not accessed through residential roads' is farcical.** Are these lorries going to fly into the site? Aren't Colney Hatch Lane and Bounds Green Road residential roads? Or don't people who live in houses and flats count as residents in the NLWA's book?
- The 'illustrative landscape map' provided gives no indication of the sheer bulk of the planned building. It will **cover an area as big as two football pitches and be 75ft (23m) high. That's a massive building the height of a six or seven storey block of flats.**
- A précis of the NLWA's answer to its own question **'Will the site be operational day and night, every day of**

**the week?’ is YES IT WILL.**

- The NLWA expects us to believe that there will be no noise or smells because **‘all waste handling and treatment will be within the buildings’**. **The doors of these buildings will be opened at least 668 times a day** to let the lorries in and out. How will these magic doors prevent the odour and noise escaping?
- Apparently there will be ‘a number of features that will help the site’s ecological value’ and ‘many trees will be retained’. The site at Pinkham Way is a mature woodland. **The newsletter makes it sound as though levelling the wood, filling it with concrete and putting a large-scale waste treatment plant on top of it will improve the site’s ecological value.**
- The NLWA are going to be offering a 25 to 30 year contract for this site. Who is to say what they might do at the site once the contract is signed and the plant is up and running?
- The NLWA is keen to set out its green credentials, but the mechanical and biological treatment plant that they have planned **will provide fuel for incineration for 30 years to come – not very green at all.**
- **‘Only a small quantity of methane will be stored on site.’ How small? Big enough to blow up the building if there is an accident or fire?** This site is on the North Circular Road and borders the East Coast mainline railway track. At any one time it will be a repository for hundreds of tonnes of combustible waste and petroleum-based fuel for vehicles. **Mechanical and biological treatment plants have been known to catch fire or even explode** – Look at what’s happened in just the past seven months! See the internet for fires at waste plants in Thirsk, Yorkshire (05.05.2011), Crymlyn Burrows, Swansea (09.02.2011) and Burscough, Ormskirk (13.10.2010).

**Ends**

#### **Notes for editors**

Residents and businesses will have four more weeks to review and comment on the latest version of the North London Waste Plan: the consultation period ends on June 22.

The outline planning application for the Pinkham Way site is due to go to Haringey planning officials by the end of this month (May 2011).

Residents fear that if the plant gets the go ahead it will fundamentally change the nature of the area, which has at least 10,000 homes within one kilometre of the Friern Barnet/Muswell Hill site. They are concerned, among other things, about traffic congestion, loss of amenity, flies, odours, noise and air pollution, health effects and the overall impact on what is an exemplar community in London that is really working well.

Pinkham Wood is a mature piece of woodland and home to rare bee orchids and bats, which are a protected species. It has been identified by Haringey Council as having ‘Borough Importance (Grade 1)’ for conservation, the same as Coldfall Wood and Alexandra Park (which also contain the remains of Victorian sewage works).

The proposed waste plant would be one of the biggest of its kind in Europe. Similar plants in Europe are built far away from towns and cities where they do not disrupt people’s lives.

See our website [www.pinkhamwayalliance.org](http://www.pinkhamwayalliance.org) for more information.