

RECLAIM ROSSLYN ROAD

Update 2: Rosslyn Road BPAS Clinic Protest

As the so-called '40 days for life' vigil comes to an end, I thought a quick update might be in order.

As you all know, the clinic protestors like to present themselves as really nice, caring people, with their 'butter-wouldn't-melt-in-their-mouth' smiley approach and their prayer beads. Well here are just a few incidents from the last couple of weeks:

1. A protestor entered the doctor's surgery and attempted to walk past reception to the toilets. She was challenged upon which she proceeded to remonstrate with the doctors' staff in the waiting area to the effect that she had a right to use their toilets as they have NHS patients. The fact that GP practices are private organizations had clearly passed her by. Her sense of entitlement was clear.
2. The doctors' staff are still finding protestor leaflets left in their toilets from when protestors do manage to sneak by the reception – hardly appropriate given that children use the toilets and given the nature of the problems encountered by some of the doctors' female patients.
3. One local resident was actually followed home by one of the protestors the other evening. Upon reaching his home, the protestor started remonstrating with the resident. His crime? He had, when passing the protestors, looked at them with disapproval.
4. The café in East Twickenham, Il Vero Gusto, has had a number of visits by the protestors loudly remonstrating with staff about hosting our petition. Remember, it is not a big café and this was intrusive! Their logic appears to be that, because it is Italian and therefore - according to the protestors - must be Catholic, the cafe should automatically side with them and not support local residents. Not exactly a substantial argument when we have been at pains to stress that it is the manner of the protest to which we are objecting!
5. One young female protestor has seen fit on a number of occasions to bring a young baby along with her on the 'vigil' and parade the baby in her arms as she protests. But, of course, they don't indulge in any form of emotional blackmail do they?
6. On a similar theme, some of the protestors have been seen producing small plastic models of fetuses when engaging with a clinic attendee. Again, heaven forbid this should be seen as emotional blackmail! Perhaps this is their answer to the universal disapproval their pavement displays produced.

7. Many of us have noticed that, once the clinic is closed, the protestors retreat to the opposite side of the road but then pray loudly at any resident who walks by. This highly ostentatious behaviour is upsetting to some but also odd – it is difficult to understand the point of it - but assuming it is to somehow win residents over to their 'side', then it displays an entirely closed mind about the effects of their behaviour on others.

None of these incidents are earth shattering but they paint a picture of an arrogant and essentially aggressive group of people who wish to impose their beliefs on others. Aside from any effect they have on clinic clients, their actions continue to have a negative impact on local residents. We need to ensure that no one is taken in by the protestors' 'nice face, only here to help' presentation. Their true nature needs to be exposed to anyone who may have been taken in!

On a related point, today for the first time there were posters leaning up against the wall of the clinic (as well as the protestors' usual ones on the opposite side of the road). Upon examination, it would seem that someone else has had enough of the protest and decided to take them on at their own game. It is an interesting reaction and one that may have a lot going for it if needed in the future. If any of you know who placed those posters there, we would be happy to talk to the person concerned – clearly he/she is an ally.

One local who supports our viewpoint spotted a young woman, apparently on her way into the clinic, in conversation with one of the protestors. The local stopped and asked her whether she was happy with the discussion. She said it was ok but took the opportunity politely to break off and enter the clinic. The protestor, who had clearly been working on the young woman for some time, was calm but said to our supporter "That's spoiled everything." No voices were raised but the local replied "Good." and then carried on their way.

Any of us can take that sort of action if we fear that a young woman is being unfairly leant on.

We now have over 350 signatures on our petition and will decide very shortly whether to carry on collecting names or present to the Council next month.

Please remember the web site:

<http://e-voice.org.uk/reclaimrosslynroad>

Also, please recommend the site to any neighbours or local friends who have not yet signed the petition **and/or have not given us their email address** – we particularly need these as there is no doubt that numbers matter.

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