

A Cleaner Greener Islington

Headliners members Layla and Tilly interviewed Islington Mayor Jyoti Vaja about her green habits - and her fancy clothes.

Where do you live?

I live in the south of the borough, in Bunhill.

Why do you have to wear special clothes?

Because I'm the First Citizen of Islington and it identifies me from everybody else – it makes me stand out in a crowd.

Are there any environmental parks where you live and do you help out with them?

We have lots of parks in Islington even though it's a small, dense borough. I do go out and help in the parks – I've planted daffodil bulbs and bluebells in the spring.

How does the council deal with all of its kitchen and garden waste?

We have introduced door-to-door recycling on street properties and on some of our housing estates. We give people a brown box to put all their kitchen waste in, and brown bags for their garden waste. That's all then collected and the garden waste goes to a big composting centre in Edmonton where they shred all the material to make compost which, believe it or not, comes back into Islington, and we use it in our parks.

Do you try to recycle all your waste?

I do try my best to recycle where I can. Two of the pledges that I've made for this year is to walk a lot more, and to stop using all these plastic bags you get every time you go into a supermarket - I'm trying to take my own bags and re-use them. I also don't print off a lot of the emails that I get, and I like to turn off lights wherever I can, to save energy - I think that's really important.

What do you think Islington will look like in 2020?

Well I hope Islington will be a cleaner, greener and safer borough, and by that I mean that we'll have done our bit to contribute towards the environment, like cutting down on CO2 emissions; hopefully we'll have less cars on the road giving out all those fumes. I'm hoping we'll have a lot more green space for everybody to enjoy.

What sort of transport do you use?

As the mayor of Islington, I've got a Jaguar. Most people think it's a big car that uses a lot of petrol, but in reality it doesn't because we've had it converted into LPG, which is one of the environmentally friendly gases which doesn't give out the high emissions that a petrol car would.

Does being the mayor make you rich?

I wish! I don't get a nice big posh house. I live on a council estate. The only thing I ever get is the lovely chain, and a car to drive me around the borough.

About this article

This interview was conducted by Tilly, 10, and Layla, 11, from Crumbles Castle Adventure Playground. It was published in the Summer 2007 edition of Loud'n'Clear magazine.

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