

Letters

Arts cuts will hurt the theatre

THEATRE 503 isn't publicly funded except through Lottery-backed Arts Council project (GFTA) funding. But to suggest, as some have, that because of this we and other organisations won't be affected by recent and further proposed Arts Council cuts is laughable. There is a massive knock-on effect: the Arts Council GFTA pot will, despite current promises, shrink further, private donors will give less because they'll be sipping from the same pool. This will lead to a serious restriction of new writers of merit getting their work on and the field being left to the rich kids.

Paul Robinson, Theatre 503

THEATRE companies and institutions continue to work hard at building meaningful relationships with their communities. How are economic decisions about the future of the arts and culture taking into consideration the social impact of these cuts?

I fear further cuts to the sector coupled with the omission of dance, music and drama from the EBacc will result in a poorer cultural ecology. Can we really expect another generation of artists and communities to flourish under these conditions?

Madani Younis, artistic director, Bush Theatre

Let London's rivers absorb flood risk

LONDON has been lucky to once again escape the worst of the floods to hit the country. The insurance industry estimates that if a similar amount of rain fell on the capital as did during the 2007 floods, the damage would run into tens of billions.

However, the Mayor must speed up the restoration of London's rivers that have been confined to narrow concrete walls or covered over in channels. Opening them up and creating natural flood plains would slow down flood water and prevent it from spilling over into streets and properties. The Mayor can also help slow the trend of people paving over front gardens, and developers building car parks, both of which prevent rainfall being absorbed into the soil.

Jenny Jones, London Assembly Greens



Game of shame: West Ham's Joey O'Brien challenges Spurs' Gareth Bale in Sunday's match

Football needs a moral compass

WEST HAM manager Sam Allardyce's petulance in the press conference after Sunday's game might have been due to the result but his evasions about fans' anti-Semitic chanting demonstrated top-level football's detachment from reality. Would it be acceptable for the rest of us to ignore workplace racism on the basis that it is outside our brief? The different tone he took yesterday was probably the product of a nudge from above, keen to avert a PR disaster. This moral vacuum is a key reason why so many are disillusioned with the Premiership.

Phil Hurst

CHANTING "Adolf Hitler, he's coming for you" is tasteless and offensive. But such behaviour shouldn't be a criminal offence. Challenge the idiots; drown out their chants with boos. But gagging people is dangerous and illiberal. That way lies tyranny.

Duleep Allirajah, spiked-online.com

POLICE and FA investigations are well-intentioned but may have zero effect. Perhaps another way out of the mess is if the majority of fans feel empowered enough to stand up to the minority.

Daniel Dorado, Sutton

Make apprenticeships work

THE accounting academy partnership works with more than 500 young people a year, engaging them in their first jobs as apprentices with employers in the City and across the country and training them to become accounting technicians. We welcome yesterday's Richard review on apprenticeships and its core recommendations. But more should be done to support the small and medium-size enterprises (SMEs) who employ the majority of apprentices nationally. It's the voice of large corporates which tends to be listened to most in reviews and the funding and structural arrangements that suit them best that are put forward.

In addition, more needs to be done to help the 750,000 19- to 24-year-olds not in education, employment or training into work – a higher proportion than among 16- to 18-year-olds. We have numerous employers who would prefer to employ someone who is a little more mature but current funding policy places an artificial block on providers once they

Certain families rely on tax credits and other support and are left worse off when their children become apprentices

Peter Marples

take people aged over 18. Simply ensuring funding parity between 16- to 18-year-olds and the older age group for a limited period would make a huge difference.

Certain families rely on tax credits and other support and are left worse off when their children engage in an apprenticeship. We know cases of young people giving up apprenticeship places and jobs because of the impact on their family's financial situation, sometimes when only relatively small amounts are at stake. It is the children of precisely these families whom the apprenticeship programmes stand to benefit most. These unintended consequences must be addressed.

Peter Marples, director, Aspire Achieve Advance Limited

THE New City Initiative welcomes the recognition the Richard Review gives to the value of work experience. But we agree with Matthew Hancock MP that the City should do more to

offer not just apprenticeships to school leavers but also paid internships for university students.

It has become clear through our work since 2010 offering students the chance to gain experience working for independent asset managers that the Government should be helping make it easier for SMEs to offer paid internships. Forcing employers to pay national insurance for a student on a three-week internship only makes it more likely that unpaid opportunities will be all that are on offer.

With half of all graduate entrants at investment banks and law firms having already completed some time working for their employer before they join, it is concerning that many companies and organisations (including parts of Parliament itself) expect graduates and undergraduates to work for free. Work experience opportunities should not just be the preserve of those from more privileged backgrounds.

Derek Laud, executive director, New City Initiative

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Give a daytime phone number. Letters withholding name and address will not be published.

CLlr Andy Hull is entitled to his opinions about regulating the private rented sector (Letters, Mon). As a London landlord I have a different perspective. my rental properties are affordable, decent and secure. Since I have a social conscience, I didn't even put the rent up when housing benefit was cut. My reward? Two months' rent arrears (and counting), a local authority which couldn't care less, and a costly, protracted legal process. If renting really is the key to the housing crisis, we need to redress the imbalance between tenants' and landlords' rights.

Elaine Hopkins

Let's hope the new Bank of England

Governor shows better judgment than his predecessor – instead of propping up the self-serving interests which got the financial and housing markets into such a mess, give us realistic interest rates and direct quantitative easing targeted at where it can really benefit the economy.

Nick Bromley

Greater Anglia had three ticket inspectors on a four-carriage train last week; yet at Chelmsford station, the queues to buy tickets went out of the door as there were not enough ticket office windows open. The company seems to have got the balance all wrong.

Nick Smith

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I am sick of hearing whingeing from people like tennis ace Anne Keothavong caught travelling on public transport without a ticket. Apparently, she forgot to top up her Oyster card. There is always an excuse, usually of memory lapse. The real problem is insufficient ticket inspections.

Paul Laundry

It is right that the Government should let wealthy people fund their own legal costs when they are accused of criminal offences, instead of freezing their assets so the taxpayer has to fund their defence under Legal Aid. But Lord Macdonald in his article on Monday talks nonsense when claiming those

acquitted will have their costs reimbursed. As he well knows, his government removed that right.

Greg Foxsmith, solicitor

Good old CPS who say they would have "no doubt charged Cyril Smith". What about their failure to charge people who are still living when it actually matters?

Richard

Wonderful that Boris is thinking of sending TfL experts to India to help upgrade their metro systems: planned weekend closures exported at a stroke.

Patrick Murray

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