

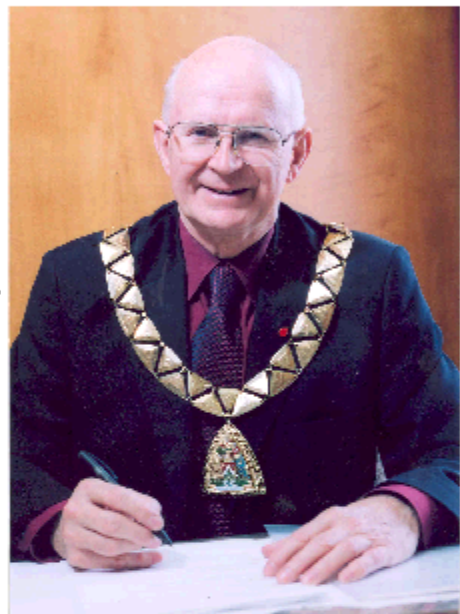
Cllr. Peter Lemmon: The Big Q

Councillor Rev. Dr. Peter Lemmon is the Brent Mayor. He is the first Methodist minister to become Mayor of Brent and has served the community at Harlesden Methodist church for nine years, only retiring last July.

Q. What is your vision or plan for Brent youth?

A. I have to say of course we're only the mayor for one year, and I've got three months more to go. So it's not entirely my vision - it's the corporate strategy. The strategy has got five objectives in this four year period, and that will go on. At the centre of this is putting children and young people first.

To that end they've been trying to do a best value review of youth services, asking young people what they themselves want. It's very important to listen to the children, to listen to children through the youth and children's user groups that we have, and we've kind of pressed the schools to have schools councils where they can express themselves in the schools. But the three prongs of it really are the youth service provision, the schools provision and the community safety provision. We have a youth crime co-ordinator, youth workers, and now, citizenship advisor in the school linked with the RE programme, and we're trying to get them to co-ordinate the work together. There's a lot of good work being done, but one arm doesn't know what the other arm is doing. Until we know what's going on and how we can work together, a lot of good work is being done, but no one else is benefiting from the best practice that is around. But clearly, our young people and children are the future, and clearly it's important that they imbibe a sense of citizenship as well as their own self-fulfilment. Of course, we entirely need the partners in the voluntary sector and the faith communities especially to help with that. I will say that we're only getting our act together rather late, but all those who are willing to be partners I think will be very really welcome.



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Did You Know?

Snakes are reptiles which are found all over the world except in Ireland, New Zealand, and the Polar region?

Songhai was a great empire in the Sudan region in West Africa. From as early as the 7th century AD, Songhai was a kingdom in the area of great northward bend of the Niger river, and in the 13th century it was part of the empire of Ancient Mali?

First Citizen's Hospitality



With Newham being the borough with the highest percentage of people from ethnic minority backgrounds (over 60%), it's not surprising that Councillor Joy Laguda, its Zimbabwean-born Civic Ambassador and First Citizen, has been pro-active in engaging people from a wide range of backgrounds whenever she organises her public activities.

Her most recent public activity was a Valentine's dinner dance and fund-raiser in aid of her official charities: African Youth Organisation, Hibiscus Housing Project, Plaistow Hospital Care Of The Elderly and Victim Support Of Newham. The resplendent attires of the mayors and mayresses, and African and Asian guests, had the Large Hall of the Newham Town Hall positively glowing.

Representatives of the said charities were on hand to witness the fun manner in which money was being raised for them. There was the usual raffle (at £5 a pop) and auction. In between, we were entertained by the Horace Stone Dance Band, a big band that took us through various styles of jazz and MOR. Made up of elderly musicians and singers, it re-affirmed one's belief that today's young artists will have long careers only if they learn to embrace live musicianship, instead of its over-reliance on computer technology.

Additional entertainment was provided by the African Youth drumming and dance troupe, Beyond The Will Smith Challenge winner Lil TK, and the contemporary dance act Soldgettes.

Whilst congratulating the entertainers, Cllr. Laguda was so smitten by the adorable 14 year old singer, she confessed that she had "fallen in love with Lil TK!" She also let us into a few secrets about Soldgettes, one of whose members is her daughter. Just a few days before their performance, "the costumes were not ready, the dancing was going a bit dodgy, but I'm glad they've done it," she said with a smile, and no doubt relived that she doesn't have to endure the constant repetition of the music they used for their dance routine!

Lil TK, A Rising Star With A Head On His Shoulders

We first heard about the then 12 year old South London singer-songwriter called Lil TK (known to close friends and family as Theo Kerlin) when he entered the 'Beyond The Will Smith Challenge' competition in 2002. He went on to win the first prize in the song category with 'Hold On' (lyrics reproduced on page 8 and the rest of the entries can be found on www.btWSC.com).

When Newham Civic Ambassador Joy Laguda asked BTWSC to nominate a young person to entertain at her fund raising dinner, Lil TK was the obvious choice. His performance of 'Hold On' charmed the Ambassador and everyone else in the town hall. Que Pasa? took the opportunity to catch up with what has been happening with Lil TK since entering our competition. But before then, here's some background.

14 year old Lil TK (he was born 7th May 1989) has an 11 year old sister called Brooklyn, who "used to play for Arsenal, but plays for Fulham now. Because it's a better girls team," reveals Lil TK. His mum Sharon is dedicated to helping her children pursue their interests. So what does she think of her budding pop star?

"He's a good boy. He drives himself, so I'm very fortunate," says mum. "It's a choice that he has made, following his music, and that's his goal in life. The least I can do is drive him here and there, and everywhere where he enjoys performing, and proving that he has got the talent and the ability to go places."

Q. What is this I hear about your winning a home studio?

A. Yes, I won a Fame Academy bursary. They filmed and interviewed me and decided I would win a home recording studio. What happened is that I got surprised — I was at school and they came to my school and my mum was interviewed. I got a gold envelope, opened it and they said there's a limo waiting outside for me. When I got into the limo, it took me to London to the Brit Awards launch party, where I met everyone — all the famous people in the music industry. I met Blue, I met Lisa Maffia, So Solid Crew, Busted, Amy Winehouse, Darkness, Muse — loads and loads of people. I got in contact with Simon from Blue and we've been speaking. He has his own record label, and we're going to try and sort out some stuff together. I think BBC are going to do TV documentary on me. It's going to come out in March. I've done a young TV series called Ruk The School, where I had to teach to teachers how to rap. That was on BBC 2 in the summer.

Q. What's your home studio set up?

A. I have a Yamaha 16G multi track recorder

which enables me to record tracks, and also produce beats and stuff. I'm getting used to the machine.

Q. Have you finished any stuff on your home studio?

A. I've done one track, which is o.k. But I think I could be better, so I'm going to re-record it in the next couple of weeks.

Q. You're now in the Brit School, right?

A. Yes, I'm in the Brit School of Performing Arts, which is funded by the music industry. We have recording studios, cinema, gym, and a radio station all in our school.

Q. Why did you choose there?

A. Because the grades are really, really good this year. 99% get grade A-C in the GCSEs, and also because it's such a great school.

Q. What life like at the Brit School?

A. It's really good. It's a different kind of school because of everyone wants to do the same thing, and everyone wants to make it big. So as a student, everyone is friendly —

no one is horrible. Everyone is really happy, and also, it's really laid back because the teachers trust you, and you really enjoy it as a student.

Q. What about the academic side?

A. It's not just performing, I have to do science, French, English, maths and sociology, and you have to be academically good as well.

Q. How are you finding the Brit School?

A. The Brit School is really good, because you're doing what you want to do outside of school during school hours, and you can come out with more qualifications. I'm doing BTEC in music and musical theatre and radio and media. I end up with eleven GCSEs.

Q. How difficult was it to get into the Brit School?

A. Quite difficult. You have to go to an audition, then you have to go to a workshop, fill in an application form, and you have an interview.

Q. Can you get in without academic qualifications?

A. You have to have academic qualifications to get in.

Q. Do you know of any people who've been to the school?

A. Do you mean famous people? There's a lot of people, like Lisa Roxanne, Another Level and Floetry.

Q. Do you have any upcoming shows?

A. The TV programme that's coming on in March, and I also want to hook up with Simon of Blue to do something.

Q. What are your aspirations?

A. When I grow up, I want to set up my own independent record label Ice Cold Records — the world's youngest record company!

From Our Very Young Contributors

To Zenat Orion

One sunny day three girls went outside. Their names were Kristie-Anne, Reanne and Danielle. They were very happy until a bully boy came to bully them. Reanne said go away and leave us alone. Nobody had ever said that to him. The boy began to cry. Nobody had ever seen him cry. The girls started to laugh. Nobody ever saw him again.

Kristie-Anne

To Zion

There was a little girl called Jenny. She had a pet fish. It was a nice fish. When her mum woke up and got changed to get ready to go to the park, they had food to eat. Jenny got ready to go and get her bike. While they were walking down the road, it started to get hot and hot and hot, so they chose to go to the beach. They went home and got changed into their sunny clothes and went to the beach, and played in the sand.

The end.

By Danielle