



HOUSE OF COMMONS
LONDON SW1A 0AA

Mr Gary Kendall
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D. Mr Kendall

I wish to place on record my concern that the dispute between Newsquest and staff of the News Shopper is still ongoing.

As you are aware, the News Shopper is a well-respected local paper that is much loved by the Bromley community. Indeed, a significant portion of the letters I receive in my mailbag every week cite stories that have been published by its Bromley title, a credit to the quality, scope and reliability of the journalism its reporters apply. It is a paper with a real local identity, and one, I know, many local people rely on.

To now put 16 weeklies under a single group managing editor, with, as I understand it, staff being forced to work either at the Sutton office or remotely, the News Shopper risks severing its long standing affinity with the local community. The well-publicised dispute between senior management and staff has, as you have no doubt seen, started to gain real momentum, particularly on social media, and I fear that to continue without some meaningful solution to the ACAS talks may lead to irreparable reputational damage for the paper, and in turn, Newsquest.

I know very well the need for efficiencies and savings, but to implement such a sudden, top-down reorganisation will almost certainly affect the quality of the News Shopper's reporting, not just in Bromley but across South London as a whole. Local papers help to keep people informed, ensure those of us who are elected are held to account, and encourage, I believe, more proactive communities.

I would therefore urge you to reconsider as a matter of urgency the relatively modest terms the staff of the News Shopper and the NUJ have put forward.

Bob Neill

Bob Neill MP