PLANS to downgrade Lewisham Hospital’s A&E department and help rescue a neighbouring health trust from financial meltdown were met with disbelief, fury and defiance.

Months of campaigning have followed that dark October day, including two truly stunning marches attended by thousands of protesters.

Last week, all that effort paid off. Lewisham Hospital campaigners have defeated the Government in court and saved our health services.

Save Lewisham Hospital campaign leader Dr Louise Irvine said: “When we first started, we were 12 people in a room thinking ‘What can we do?’ and feeling hopeless. ‘But this was so just and so right. That’s why it resonated with people. We reached every corner, nook and cranny of the community.’

Turn to page 3 for more
Boris presses ahead with fire station closures

LONDON’s mayor has overruled the fire authority and ordered the closure of 10 fire stations – including Downham and Woolwich. The plans, which would save £28.8m and cut 552 jobs, had been rejected by the London Fire and Emergency Planning Authority. But Boris Johnson has ordered the cuts to go ahead anyway, saying he wants the plans implemented by September 16. In his decision notice, the Mayor said the money could not be found elsewhere and that “Front-line savings can be made without affecting public safety”. Fire Brigades Union executive member for London Ian Lehair said: “The cuts are dangerous and wrong. “This is devastating news for Londoners with lives across the capital being put at risk by the Mayor’s reckless cuts. “It’s also an affront to democracy.” Following a consultation process, the original plans were changed to remove the closure of News Cross and Clapham stations.