The London Riots – 2011

“I was there in the London borough of Hackney as the riots broke out. I heard the furious voices of kids on our burning streets: angry about the phone-hacking scandal; angry about the MPs’ expenses scandal; angry about the bank bailouts; angry about police corruption and the abuse of stop-and-search powers. This was no party. And for most, it wasn’t about consumerism either – I saw a girl steal a pint of milk for her mum because she said her family were too poor to buy food.”

Bryn Phillips, Community Organiser, London

Questions to answer in your own notes:

1) What does ‘consumerism’ mean and why did people think the riots were about that?
2) Does Bryn think that democracy in the UK is working? Explain your answer.
3) Bryn refers to ‘kids’ here but includes young people up to their early twenties. What does this tell us about the UK democratic system?
4) Do you think that the riots were justified? Explain your answer.