



**BROMLEY LABOUR GROUP NEWS**  
**NEWSLETTER OF THE LABOUR MEMBERS OF BROMLEY COUNCIL**  
**CRAY VALLEY WEST WARD:**  
**SUE GIBBENS, JOHN HOLBROOK & COLIN WILLETTS**  
**PENGE & CATOR WARD:**  
**PETER FOOKES, JOHN GETGOOD & KAREN ROBERTS**

**MAY - JUNE 2004 EDITION**

**CARR PARKS IN HOT SEAT AS BROMLEY TORIES SQUABBLE AGAIN**

The Tories on Bromley have elected their third leader in as many years as their internal squabbling surfaced again at the Council AGM held in the middle of May. Former leader, Russell Mellor stood down just before the election after his much publicised row with the borough Chief Executive, David Mellor. This and general incompetence had made his position untenable after just a year in office. Bromley Common Councillor Stephen Carr has taken up the hot seat. He was the former Portfolio holder for Social Care, Health and Housing who presided over two independent inspections that have failed to lift Bromley out of its no star status. That may be a little unfair on Bromley but the reality is that he has failed to address the major problems of recruitment, lack of initiative and funding that have bedevilled the Social Services and Housing department since the Tories resumed control of the council in 2001. It will be interesting to see if he manages to retain the job leading up to the next full council elections in May 2006. Carr is replaced at Social Care, Health and Housing by Kelsey and Eden Park Councillor, Chris Phillips. Other changes see Graham Arthur move from the Local Economy Portfolio to Children and Young People, Tim Stevens moves from Community Safety to Leisure and Community. He is replaced by Colin Smith. Another aspiring leadership contender, Colin Bloom takes on the role of Local Economy Portfolio holder. Neil Reddin representing Hayes ward is out of favour and has lost his post at Leisure and Community. George Taylor who was an outside bet for the leadership retains his post at Environment. Another former leader, Michael Tickner, who held the Children and Young People Portfolio for last year, also has more time on his hands after he was a victim of the new regime.

**TORIES CHANGE CONSTITUTION TO CREATE “JOBS FOR THE BOYS”**

Bromley Tories have changed the constitution of the borough by not allowing opposition councillors to chair the scrutiny committees. This was against the advice from officers who favoured all party Chairs to scrutinise the work of the portfolio holders. Sue Gibbens has thus been deposed as Chair of Leisure and Community Policy, Development and Scrutiny and a Lib Dem has suffered the same fate with the local economy. It remains to be seen in future years whether they also decide to get rid of opposition members on the Executive. In fairness, Bromley is one of the few authorities where opposition members sit on the executive of the council. John Holbrook has done some sterling work for the Labour group in this role and asked many pertinent questions following the much publicised row between David Bartlett and former Tory Leader, Russell Mellor.

## **SPECIAL NEEDS REVIEW**

The council are currently consulting with parents of children with special educational needs across the borough with regard to future provision and the integration of pupils into mainstream schooling. John Getgood was eventually allowed by the Tories to sit on a small working panel looking at the issues. Bromley currently spends nearly £27 million across the borough and our statemented pupils at 1840 (3.8%) are relatively high compared to other authorities. There has been a situation which has been allowed to develop in the past where parents from more leafier parts of the borough have demanded action with pupils in the less leafier parts missing out. It is important that the finances are targeted at those pupils most in need but we will not allow the Tories to use this exercise as a cost cutting measure. There are currently units that have vacancies and increasingly pupils are being integrated into mainstream with the appropriate support. Consultation is due to end on 18<sup>th</sup> June with a report going to the Executive in July.

## **TESCO PLANNING APPLICATION REJECTED**

Tesco had their application for a major new store in Orpington rejected at the April meeting of the Development Control committee. We are waiting to hear if an appeal will be lodged. The scheme was for a new store, 64 flats of mixed tenure and a medical facility.

## **GOVERNMENT GRANT AIDS RAMSDEN ESTATE**

Proposals to improve the Ramsden Estate have been boosted by the news that they are going to receive nearly £2.7 Million of capital grant funding from the Government Office for London. This will see the demolition of Arun, Medway and Cuckmere Courts and the development of 50 new homes. Broomleigh Housing Association are leading on the regeneration initiative.

## **EARLY SUPPORT FOR CHILDREN WITH COMPLEX NEEDS**

Bromley is one of only nine authorities nationally selected to become Pathfinders in a new £13 Million, 4 year programme, helping the Government to improve multi-agency services and integrate support for babies and very young children with complex health, learning and therapy needs. A keyworker will co-ordinate appointments provide support and information and be a single point of contact for the family. This work is based at the Phoenix Centre in Bromley and will mean services adapting to the needs of the family rather than the family adapting to the needs of the service provider.

## **SECONDARY SCHOOL LATEST**

The latest application by protestors to register land at Magpie Hall Lane as a “town or village green” has been dismissed by the General Purposes Committee of the council in Mid May. This means that building work for the new Church of England secondary school can hopefully resume soon.

## **TORIES TO CLOSE DAY CENTRE FOR THE ELDERLY?**

Bromley Tories are currently consulting on proposals to close the Beckenham and West Wickham day centre for the elderly in Beckenham Road. They have been running down services there since taking back control of the council since 2001.

## **CONTACTING BROMLEY LABOUR GROUP/SCHOOL GOVERNORS**

We are always happy to take up issues that you raise with us. One of the best ways of doing that is on email or through the council website – [www.bromley.gov.uk](http://www.bromley.gov.uk)

You can contact councillors by using the same format eg, [Peter.Fookes@bromley.gov.uk](mailto:Peter.Fookes@bromley.gov.uk) this is the same for members and officers of the authority as well.

We also need to have more school governors. If you are interested, please contact one of us or Janet Heathcote at Bromley.

A reminder that if you will not be able to vote in person for the GLA/Mayoral and European Elections on 10<sup>th</sup> June, then 2<sup>nd</sup> June is the deadline for a postal vote.