

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

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BROMLEY TORIES BUDGET EXPOSED AS A SHAM

Bromley Tories have failed to recognise that their current budget is a sham. Their efforts to keep the council tax as low as possible are already having an effect on residents. There is a large backlog of planning enforcement notices where the council have failed to take action against developers/individuals who are abusing the system. The lack of resources was highlighted at a recent meeting of the Development Control committee and has been raised by Councillors Peter Fookes and John Holbrook. Bromley residents expect a first class service but are not receiving it under the current administration. The Tories try to do everything on the cheap or expect central government to pay for everything that the borough does. Other examples of where the budget is false include the Learning Disabilities section of Social Services which was recently called in for debate where the budget is £1.1 million overspent. This should have been foreseen. The Tories have also in effect cut money to older people by introducing more stringent criteria for those who need support. The budget here has been cut by £250,000.

BROMLEY TORIES TRY TO TALK UP CRIME

In a desperate bid by Bromley Tories to talk up crime, they have now attacked the police for the transferring out of 35 officers to other boroughs. They conveniently seemed to have forgotten that they will be replaced by 35 officers from other boroughs. It may be that this is not the best use of resources but that is more of an internal police matter, rather than something that the council should get directly involved in. The expansion of the Safer Neighbourhood wards scheme with a sergeant, two constables and four police community support officers in each of the wards of Penge and Cator, Hayes, Biggin Hill and the Crays has certainly had an effect on the level of crime in this borough which continues to fall dramatically. Of course, we have to be on our guard and there is a lot more to be done but there is no doubt that the crime figures are moving in the right direction. New powers under the Anti-Social Behaviour act have stopped youths congregating in large numbers in Bromley town centre. The government are currently consulting on further measures that can be taken to make more of an impact on those figures. Certainly in Penge, the police report that it has been a quieter summer with less incidents of youth disorder over the holidays. The police say that about 30 people in this borough cause 90% of the problems, we now have to ask ourselves to what extent do we restrict their liberties? The police do monitor those individuals far more. At last the police seem to be getting on the front foot rather than being reactive all the time.

CONSULTATION ON FUTURE OF CRYSTAL PALACE PARK

Consultation is currently taking place on the future of Crystal Palace Park and the National Sports Centre. Londoners are getting the chance to have their say on ideas for rejuvenation on a special website – www.Crystalpalacepark.org.uk The London Development Agency is taking on responsibility for the sports centre in 2006 and, possibly for the park as a whole by 2009.

This consultation is an opportunity to shape the work ahead to create first class sports facilities and make the once iconic park truly great again. This will help drive the regeneration of surrounding areas, boosting local businesses, bringing in jobs and creating an excellent learning resource for local schools.

BIGGIN HILL HOUSING SCHEME DEFERRED

An application to build 149 dwellings on the site of the former RAF married quarters off Main Rd in Biggin Hill was deferred at the August meeting of the Development Control committee to seek a reduction in the number of units proposed. The Taylor Woodrow & Artesian Property Partnership proposal would have meant the demolition of existing former RAF buildings. The scheme would have included an element of affordable housing and a financial contribution towards the proposed new Heritage Centre/museum as a mark of remembrance to the role played by Biggin Hill, particularly in relation to the Battle of Britain in World War Two. The applicants are now expected to submit a revised application. Biggin Hill Airport Ltd objected to the scheme as they believe it will jeopardise the safety and security of the airport.

GOVERNMENT CASH BOOST TO MAKE HOMES WARMER

Cold busting grants worth thousands of pounds are available this Autumn to help combat the estimated 400 cold-related deaths in Bromley each year. The new £200,000 cash boost will mean that some of the poorest residents in the borough will be able to enjoy a warmer and healthier winter. Residents in receipt of an income related benefit can claim a life saving £4000 to install insulation and heating measures in their homes. This special fund is limited, so call "Coldbusters" now to claim your energy efficiency grant on 0800 358 6668. The new grant is managed by Creative Environmental Networks and it covers loft and cavity wall insulation and draught proofing. Residents may be able to get replacement boilers or new central heating systems.

NEW TESCO SCHEME FOR ORPINGTON

Tesco have submitted a revised planning application seeking full planning permission for the redevelopment of Station Rd car park and adjoining land in Orpington. An earlier scheme was refused in April. The new scheme creates basement level parking which reduces the height of the elevations to Orchard Grove and the setting back of the building on that frontage. The scheme now comprises a retail store, parking for 924 cars, 73 flats and a medical facility. It is expected that the application will be decided at the Development Control Committee meeting on October 26th.

RACHEL NOTLEY CENTRE CLOSURES

The Rachel Notley day centre for the elderly in Beckenham is in the process of closing after Tory councillors refused to stave off closure at a meeting in July. Centre users have been given the option of transferring to Melvin Hall in Penge or the Bertha James Centre in Masons Hill. The site is expected to be used for the care of elderly people with dementia.

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 e mail or through the council website – www.Bromley.gov.uk You can contact councillors by using the same format eg, Peter.Fookes@Bromley.gov.uk This is the same for members and officers of the authority as well. You can also use snail mail and write to us c/o Bromley Civic Centre, Stockwell Close, Bromley BR1 3UH.

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