

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**

JULY / AUGUST 2005 EDITION

BROMLEY TORIES ATTACK REED

The first Council meeting in July since Councillor Rod Reed left the Tories to become an Independent led to a slanging match with his former colleagues. The Kelsey and Eden Park Councillor stood against Jacqui Lait in the General Election and polled 800 votes. He particularly highlighted the lack of progress in having a residents parking scheme in the Beckenham town centre area. George Taylor, the Portfolio Holder for the Environment was left to defend his policy on basically relying on other people to fund any environmental initiatives in the borough. This is mainly through Transport for London (TFL). Taylor has also refused to allow road humps to be installed in the borough, in many instances defying the advice of engineering experts.

MOBILE PHONE MOTION AGREED

A motion with all party support to look into the issues around mobile phone masts and the need for full planning permission for them was passed at the July meeting. This will be forwarded to the government. It is though difficult for Bromley to take issues like this forward as they are not members of the Local Government Association (LGA) which lobbies central government on issues of relevance to all councils. There is certainly a proliferation of these masts appearing all over the borough with phone companies seemingly reluctant to work together on sharing them. In fairness, most of us use these modern day communication aids and we can't reject all of them.

SCHOOLS CELEBRATE SPECIALIST SUCCESS

Two schools in Bromley are celebrating after having been awarded specialist status. From September, Kelsey Park School for Boys in Beckenham will be a specialist sports college and the Ravensbourne School in Bromley will specialise in media arts. The announcement means that the schools will be able to offer improved facilities and attract increased funding. This news bring Bromley's total number of specialist colleges to 15 out of 18 secondary schools which is one of the highest proportion in the country. Ravensbourne will focus on media studies, art and design and English. It will have new projects, including the creation of a new media broadcast centre with its own TV and radio studio. Kelsey Park will be using the increased funding to install a computer suite for PE and creating another business room.

GOVERNMENT PLANS FOR EXTENDED SCHOOLS

Schools in Bromley are working together to take forward the government initiative on extended schools to put them at the heart of our communities. The council has asked heads to come up with proposals to set up Extended Schools for everyone living and working in the borough. Buildings and facilities are used to provide a range of services, including childcare, education, sports, the arts, health and social care and community uses before and after the normal school day, at weekends and during holidays. This is all part of the government agenda "Every Child Matters" arising from the 2004 Children Act in response to the death of Victoria Climbié. Schools are not expected to run all of these services themselves and will work in partnership with other agencies. They are getting together in neighbourhood groups to decide their own local priorities. The Priory School in Orpington became the first full Extended School in January. More will be set up in the coming year and it is hoped that all areas will be covered by 2008.

WOODBROOK SCHOOL TO CLOSE?

The Council are currently consulting parents and carers on a proposal which would see the Woodbrook School in Hayne Road in Beckenham close and merge with Rectory Paddock School in St Pauls Cray. Other parts of the consultation include upgrades to the Glebe School in West Wickham and extending facilities at Marjorie McClure School in Chislehurst. The latter would include provision for pupils with severe learning difficulties and children with significant medical health needs. Public meetings have been held across the borough. This is all part of the many proposals looking at the future of Special Educational Needs (SEN) in the borough. Further information is available from Kevin Gerred at the Civic Centre.

BROMLEY "TORY TALIBAN" UNDER ATTACK OVER EQUALITY ISSUES

Liam Curran, Labour Parliamentary candidate in Beckenham has called on Michael Howard to make Bromley comply with the spirit of the new gay weddings law. Bromley Tories are refusing to recognise civil partnerships which prompted a protest march at the end of July. Tory MP, Alan Duncan has already attacked the "Tory Taliban" over this issue and their refusal to recognise that Britain and the world has moved on over these issues. Ken Livingstone has also written to Bromley in an attempt to get leading Tories in the borough to rethink the issue. The "Nasty Party" have clearly not changed, even though some Tories are taking a more enlightened approach.

BISHOP JUSTUS SCHOOL NEW BUILDING TO OPEN IN SEPTEMBER

The new Church of England secondary school which opened in temporary accommodation last September at Magpie Hall Lane in Bromley Common will now be ready for the Autumn term in this coming September. The school has six forms of entry in year 7 and sixty students in year 8. It is already heavily oversubscribed for September.

BROMLEY TORIES CUT MIND FUNDING

As a result of Tory Cuts in funding, Bromley Mind, the charity who look after the interests of people with mental health problems have had to make staff redundant. This seems a pretty mean spirited attack on the most vulnerable in our society.

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 the old 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.