

# **BROMLEY LABOUR GROUP NEWS**

**NEWSLETTER OF THE LABOUR MEMBERS OF BROMLEY COUNCIL**

**CRAY VALLEY WEST WARD  
COLIN WILLETTS**

**PENGE & CATOR WARD  
PETER FOOKES, JOHN GETGOOD, & KAREN ROBERTS**

**MAY - JUNE 2007**

This is a report of the April Council Meeting and the Annual General Meeting held on Wednesday 16<sup>th</sup> May.

## **BROMLEY TORIES FAIL VICTIMS OF CRIME AND VULNERABLE YOUNGSTERS**

Don't just take our word for this, a recent inspection report by the Youth Justice Board highlighted the failing service being provided by Bromley Youth Offending Team and deemed it to be inadequate. The Labour group asked many questions of the ruling Tory group on the council and in particular, why members had not received a copy of the report even though it was available on the Youth Justice Board website. Eventually, two months after the publication of the report, it appeared on a council agenda. Amongst the issues that the report identified were poor management, the lack of restorative justice, poor court reports, an unsafe service, staff lacking in qualifications and most importantly victims were ignored. The YOT is currently located at Masons Hill but has had many different homes. In mitigation, there does seem to have been a recent improvement following some managerial changes in the organisation but Bromley Tories are quick to bleat on about wanting more police officers. They need to put their own house in order before they start criticising others. Youth Offending Teams were set up in every borough by the government to address the needs of those youngsters who are at risk of or who have committed offences. Various agencies work together, i.e., Education, Social Services, the Probation Service and the Police to identify offenders and to come up with individual strategies to address their behaviour. An Improvement Action Plan is currently being prepared.

Ironically, there does not seem to have been an increase in youth crime in the borough, but it is clear that borough residents should have expected a greater fall with this service operating effectively. There are 400 youngsters in receipt of this service which is far too high for a borough like Bromley. Along with concerns over the Behaviour Service in the borough in Bromley schools which the Tories have failed to address and properly fund, it is clear that there is much work to be done. Despite the award in February of 4 stars after the Comprehensive Performance Assessment (CPA), it is clear that Bromley Tories and the borough as a whole is far from perfect. Crime and anti-social behaviour is still seen as a major problem by Bromley residents despite the record police numbers in Bromley. There are signs that the situation is improving generally but as ever, there is no room for complacency. Certainly, no thanks to Bromley Tories after the publication of this report in March.

## **NO CHANGES TO LABOUR LEADERSHIP**

Councillor John Getgood was re-elected as Labour Group leader following the AGM in April. Peter Fookes continues as his deputy as well as group Secretary. Karen Roberts stays on as Chair and whip. John Getgood will continue to co-ordinate press and publicity for the Labour group. Fred Miles continues his excellent job of Minutes Secretary.

## **CARR RE-ELECTED TORY LEADER**

Councillor Stephen Carr (Bromley Common and Keston) was re-elected as Tory Leader at the Council AGM. This will be his third year in the post. In a surprising move, former Leader and long serving Councillor, Michael Tickner (Copers Cope) lost his Local Economy Portfolio post to Julian Bennington (Biggin Hill) and Colin Bloom (Bickley) came back to the Cabinet to replace George Taylor (Shortlands) as Portfolio Holder for Public Protection and Community Safety. The new mayor is Pauline Tunnicliffe (Orpington) who along with Councillor Bennington were newly elected to the council last May. Brenda Thompson (Cray Valley East) and Lib Dem Councillor is the new Deputy Mayor. The Lib Dem leadership remains unchanged with Councillor David McBride (Cray Valley East) continuing for a second year. The other Portfolio Holders continue as per last year with Colin Smith - Environment, Graham Arthur (Hayes and Coney Hall) - Adults and Community Services, Resources - Neil Reddin (Hayes and Coney Hall) and Ernest Noad - Children and Young People.

## **ADMISSION POLICY TO RECEPTION CLASSES TO REMAIN UNCHANGED**

The Council have recently consulted with parents with the intention of having a single point of entry to primary schools in September. This was rejected by 70% of parents so Councillor Ernest Noad (Shortlands), the Portfolio Holder for Children and Young People decided not to change the current two intakes in September and January. Pre-schools providers were very concerned about the effect that it would have on them with children only just turning 4 starting school in September. The current system sees children born between September and February starting school in September and those born from 1<sup>st</sup> March onwards, commencing in January. Some schools and head teachers were in favour of the proposed changes.

## **COLIN WILLETTS CONTINUES TO TAKE UP ENVIRONMENTAL CONCERNS**

Colin Willetts continues to take up environmental issues from the Crays. He has asked many searching questions of the Portfolio Holder for the Environment, Colin Smith (Plaistow and Sundridge). This relates to missed bin collections, graffiti and rubbish removal and the continuing concerns re the lack of recycling around flats and the sporadic service that is provided.

## **OAKLANDS JUNIOR SCHOOL GOES INTO SPECIAL MEASURES**

A recent Ofsted report highlighted concerns about the management of Oaklands Junior School in Biggin Hill as it was placed in special measures. It is the only school in the borough in that situation at the moment. There were some positive outcomes from the report and a recent parental meeting expressed support for the school. An action plan is being drawn up to address the weaknesses highlighted. It was agreed to merge Biggin Hill Infants and Junior schools recently after a general reduction in pupil numbers in the Biggin Hill area.

## **CONTACTING BROMLEY LABOUR GROUP**

We are always happy to take up issues that you raise with us and to keep the Tories in Bromley in check. One of the best ways of doing that is on e mail 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 have our own website which can be accessed at [www.bromley-labour-group.co.uk](http://www.bromley-labour-group.co.uk). You can also write to us c/o Bromley Civic Centre, Stockwell Close, Bromley BR1 3UH.