

# 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

SEPTEMBER - OCTOBER 2007

This is a report of the September Council meeting.

## BROMLEY ALLOCATED £600,000 FOR PLAY STRATEGY

The Council have been allocated nearly £600,000 over a three year period to develop a play strategy and action plan from the Big Lottery Programme. Projects must have built into them the defining principles described by the Big Lottery as the "Three Frees: be freely chosen by children and young people; be free of charges to children and young people; and, children and young people are free to come and go. A panel has decided to allocate the money with £190,000 going to a site near Oaklands School at Biggin Hill, £150,000 to St Paul's Cray Recreation Ground, and the rest to mobile provision in the form of two vans and interchangeable project equipment. This will not just be used by pre school children but those up to the age of 19. The Local Area Agreement for 2008 includes an obesity stretch target which refers to the importance of physical exercise such as play in meeting this target. Areas of priority will include Penge, Anerley, the Crays, Mottingham, Biggin Hill, and Bromley, Beckenham and Orpington Town Centres. Shorter term projects will be designed to be more flexible and responsive to need and will involve more intensive work with young people.

## CRYSTAL PALACE BY ELECTION

The Lib Dems retained this seat at the by election on Thursday 6<sup>th</sup> September despite an excellent campaign from Kevin Brooks. The full result was Tom Papworth (Lib Dems) 1051, Kevin Brooks (Labour) 537, Jason Hadden (Tory) 398, and Karen Moran (Greens) 129. The turnout was just under 25%. The by-election was caused by the death of Chris Gaster. The result was pretty similar to the figures from May 2006 at the last local elections. Tributes were paid to Chris Gaster at the meeting from all parties. He had previously served as a Labour Councillor from 1971 to 1982. The Tories ran a very strange campaign which included spreading lies that Crystal Palace Park was to close from March of next year. Proposals for the redevelopment of the Park are expected in the Autumn. Do Bromley Tories still want Ken and the London Development Agency to take over the running of the site by 2009? The new Lib Dem Councillor also let it be known on his web log that he considered that the Labour Party attracted "lowlife". Unsurprisingly, his website was taken down to the public during the campaign! It is clear that many people in this ward vote Labour nationally and Lib Dem locally.

## TORY MOTION ON PLANNING GREEN PAPER HAS NOTHING NEW TO SAY

In a motion to Full Council, Bromley Tories virtually aped a previous motion on back gardens by trying to stop new development in Bromley and attacking the Government's Green Paper on Housing. They were supported by most of their Lib Dem allies. Michael Tickner, former Tory Leader, was also spouting off about the stagnant housing market! This is when house prices have virtually doubled in the last ten years. Labour Leader John Getgood attacked the nimbyism of the Tories who were nowhere to be seen when Nicholas Ridley gave planning consent in the 1980's for whole swathes of the borough to be turned into flats. Why should other authorities have to provide more housing when Bromley will not accept its fair share? What do the Tories propose to do if ever they are elected nationally again? Demand for housing in this borough will not suddenly grind to a halt. The government are committed to protecting the green belt and to maintain residential amenity. New development will not be allowed unless it is of good quality and fits in with neighbouring properties. The government will be producing a further paper in the Autumn to address the needs of housing for older people. There is demand for smaller units due to the fact that far more people prefer to live on their own. Bromley Tories accept that there will be more housing in town centres but this will not be enough to satisfy demand. Bromley received a further £409,010 of Planning Delivery Grant in July so doubtless we will see the Tories complaining that they have not got enough money again! The fact is that virtually all development in Bromley in 2006 occurred on brownfield land and there are no proposals that will have an impact on the green belt in the borough. We need to bring back into use the thousand or so properties in the borough that remain empty, and also to concentrate on making sure that new developments are of good quality and are sound proofed.

## TORY ENVIRONMENT CHIEF ADMITS HALF THE TREES IN BROMLEY NEED PRUNING

Councillor Colin Smith (Plaistow and Sundridge), Tory Environment Portfolio Holder, admitted under questioning from Labour Deputy Leader, Peter Fookes that half of the 47,000 trees in the borough need pruning. There does not seem to be any strategy in the borough for dealing with the issue. Admittedly the situation has been made more by the inclement weather during the Summer but there are increasing complaints from residents about trees in their area being neglected. Councillors Colin Willetts and Karen Roberts have also highlighted instances in the Crays where repairs to the footway and highways have not been carried out or the quality has been so poor that contractors have had to go back again. This is another false economy from the Tories when they can't maintain trees due to the high altar of having the lowest council tax in London.

## NEW CHIEF EXECUTIVE ARRIVES

Doug Patterson, Previously Chief Executive of Wokingham Borough Council replaced David Bartlett as the new Chief Executive at the end of July. He is currently touring round the borough with councillors to identify issues in their particular wards.

## DID YOU KNOW?

It may seem a bit "big brother-ish" but you can now check the planning history of every property in the borough online. Records currently go back to the 1980's. Documents relating to new developments are also available. All meeting documents are now also available online through the Council and Democracy section on the recently refurbished Bromley Council website. Why not come along and see what your local councillors are getting up to?

## 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 at [www.Bromley.gov.uk](http://www.Bromley.gov.uk). You can contact councillors by using the same format e.g., [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 or leave a message on our answer phone 0208-460-0626.