

New Town hut opened

The community hut is now open on De Beauvoir New Town for all who want to use it. There will be Bingo every Tuesday night as a start, and we are hoping to do something very soon for children.

People have been fighting for a long time to get some sort of premises in the area to use for various activities in the daytime or evenings. It is up to you, tenants and public, to show that you are interested and come forward with your ideas on what use should be made of these premises.

For any comments, enquiries or bookings contact: Mr. R. Minton, 10 Benyon Court, Balmes Rd, N.1.

MRS C. CROWFOOT, SECRETARY, DE BEAUVOIR COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION & CIVIC CENTRE.

The hut is the building at the rear of Rozel Court which served as a temporary rent office. It has now been extended and renovated to give us a small but quite pleasant hall, as we saw on Saturday February 23, when it was opened for the first time. There is only one fault with the hut - there is no heating at the moment. But if the community association had waited for the heating the hut would still be unopened. A joint community association was set up in January when the Council insisted that community halls and temporary huts could not be administered by different tenants' associations. So a committee has been formed from the three existing organisations in the New Town - the New Town Tenants' Association, the Rozel Court Social Club and the De Beauvoir 1972 New Town Tenants' Association. These associations nominated three members each to serve as a committee to take over the administration of the hut. REG CROWFOOT

JUMP IN - JUNK OUT!

At its annual general meeting in November, the De Beauvoir Association was pleased to welcome Tim Voelcker of the Islington Boat Club to speak about the Regent's Canal - our local canal - and its possible amenity uses. Soon afterwards, the association set up a canal group to look at the situation and get things moving.

After inspecting the towpath and making a dinghy trip along the Kingsland Basin, the group agreed on 3 priorities

1 the towpath should be opened to the public as soon as possible. Contact has been made with Hackney Council (who have agreed to the opening - but when?) and the British Waterways Board. Ian Gibson is arranging a survey team to press the council with facts and show them what can be done.

2 the group were ashamed at the amount of rubbish in the water so Guy Gervis and Richard Paton are organising a "Junk out" for mid-May.

3 a longer term project is the formation of a community boating centre on Kingsland Basin. Reg Crowfoot is in touch with ILEA and other community groups about this.

The temporary road closures in central De Beauvoir, which were due in January, have been postponed to April - due to the failure of GLC officials to process the legalities.

ASSOCIATION PUTS OWN PLAN TO INQUIRY:

Extend school on road - and shut out traffic

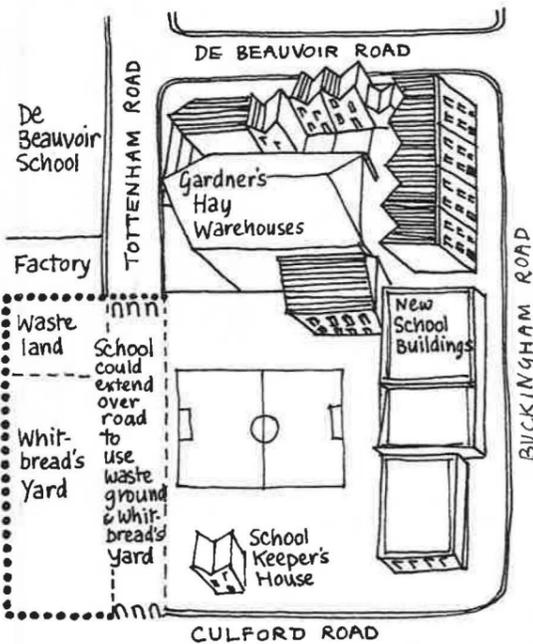
Graham Parsey, chairman of the De Beauvoir Association, informed a Government inspector at a public inquiry in Hackney last month that 7 houses which the Greater London Council was seeking to demolish as 'unfit' were quite capable of being modernised.

The GLC is seeking to purchase compulsorily the houses in Buckingham and De Beauvoir roads, plus Gardiner's, the hay merchants, to complete the rebuilding and extension of the Kingsgate R.C. junior and infants' school. The De Beauvoir Assoc. and two tenants of houses in Buckingham Rd are objecting to the demolition of the houses. The association has argued since 1969 that the school site should be extended over Tottenham Rd to save the houses and to close a dangerous road.

Mr Parsey said at the Inquiry on Feb. 5th that Hackney Council had modernised a similar house opposite those in Buckingham Rd and was improving another 11 houses in De Beauvoir, "many of them in worse condition than those under this compulsory purchase order". The De Beauvoir Trust had also modernised a house nearby and had improved many others.

The two tenants also objected that their homes were capable of being improved to modern standards. Mr. Allen, a builder, cross-examined the GLC's witness, who had maintained that the houses were unfit for human habitation, and brought out that he agreed that the houses were structurally sound.

Mr Parsey said that 161/161A De Beauvoir Rd was a "unique building of considerable architectural and local



'Tottenham Road would be safe and seven houses saved for local families' - Graham Parsey

interest as a dwelling house and office" and suggested that the warehousing at the rear could be used as a covered play area for the school.

He added: "There has been a determination to push the proposals through at all costs since 1966, without regard

to changing attitudes and conditions." He gave the inspector a file of correspondence between the Association and GLC about the extension and complained that the Association's constructive suggestions had been ignored.

The Association had objected to the first phase of the school extension in 1970, but had withdrawn their objection to allow the urgently-needed demolition and rebuilding of the old school buildings to go ahead according to the Council's timetable. The Council had, however, agreed to reconsider the plan to demolish the houses the Association was defending, and to extend the school over Tottenham Rd instead. Instead, they had taken a decision to go ahead regardless, without consulting the Association at all.

Mr Parsey explained that there was strong backing locally for the closure of Tottenham Rd, which was used by through traffic as a notoriously dangerous slip road alternative to Balls Pond Rd. The parents and staff of the De Beauvoir School had expressed their concern, and Hackney Council had been willing to agree to the road closure. The closure would also mean that more land would be available for the school extension.

The Association is also dissatisfied with the notice given of the public inquiry. "Although our concern was well known to the GLC, we did not receive any notification at all," says Mr Parsey. "Fortunately, Derek Mahoney, of De Beauvoir Rd, noticed a news item in the Hackney Gazette about the compulsory purchase."

PLAYSITE NEEDS COUNCIL GRANT



John White, above, obviously enjoyed giving De Beauvoir more nights of Old Tyme Music Hall at the Duke of Wellington's Sugawm Kitchen this month with the Tower Theatre people.

The De Beauvoir Adventure Playground has now been open for almost a year. We have managed to keep it going during the winter months, at least at weekends and during the holidays, but we still have a number of problems. The greatest of these is financial. Despite many requests for aid, and the fact that it is virtually the only playground in the area, the Council has still not seen fit to grant us any money to keep it running, even though it accepts the need for such a playground. Consequently our finances are very uncertain. We have had to rely on volunteers. Penny Duke, who worked on the site during most of the winter, in all weathers and with great energy and enthusiasm, did so for the meagre sum of £3 per week.

We held a very successful barbecue in December, organised by Penny with the invaluable help of many parents. In spite of the fact that it was freezing cold weather, it attracted well over 100 kids and many parents and local people.

Another of our problems has been lack of shelter for bad weather, so the kids have been restricted to the usual outdoor activities. But as the weather is getting better, more and more kids are coming back again with the same enthusiasm that they showed last summer. We are already planning trips for the Easter holidays and maybe camping trips for the summer if we can get the money. Anyone who would like to help on the site, either building or just supervising, is always welcome.

We have another volunteer waiting to start work on the playground, but we can't find anyone to give him board & lodging. If you have a spare room the De Beauvoir Assoc. will pay £5 per week. Ring 249 2353 or 249 5646.

FRANCES HASTE

Name a local road

Would you like to name a local road? The central De Beauvoir road closures mean that some parts of local roads must be re-named, but council officers find it hard to produce suitable names.

Ideas such as Beaulieu, Heathford, Larchwood, Kettering roads, or Hearst, Brice, Parthas streets, were rejected by the residents' steering committee last week. The committee would like to name the roads after local families who've lived for generations in the area - like the Laws or Allardyses. Another idea is to commemorate famous residents like Harry Champion or Lon Chaney.

If you have an idea, please sent it to De Beaver (137 Balls Pond Rd) and we will pass it on. Also, do you prefer 'roads', 'avenues', 'streets', 'groves', or 'walks'? All ideas and comments will be considered, and De Beaver will give a bottle of champagne for the most imaginative idea.

This is the last De Beaver which I'll be editing. I should like to thank everyone who has helped to produce & distribute the paper over the past 3 years and all of you who read it. I hope it has been interesting & useful, and will continue to be so. We have a good editorial team and we've tried to keep you informed about what is happening in the area fairly and honestly. I hope we've succeeded. DOFFY WEIR

Mabel Hall, of 51 Ufton Road, has kindly offered to act as a post-box for De Beaver

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Community politics

The De Beauvoir Association is a community group which works for the general good of the community. It is a non-party political organisation, but naturally is made up of individuals all of whom are free to have their own political (and other) views. The variety of views contributes to the 'life' of the De Beauvoir Association. For this reason, our committee members and officers are free to express their views as individuals and to work for political parties locally. In the recent general election, committee members and officers were active on behalf of all 3 parties. They do not, however, represent at any time the views of the De Beauvoir Association. Officers who stand for election locally are expected to resign during the campaign to make it clear that they do not represent - nor are using - the Association. GRAHAM PARSEY (Chairman, De Beauvoir Assoc).

Lovely evening

First let us thank the warden Mrs Howes and husband for giving us old folks such a lovely evening on the 19th, in which we think it was most kind of them. They did not leave a thing out, refreshments etc. We all say it was the best Xmas party we have had, & our surprise when our councillor Mrs F. Newell paid us a visit. Not forgetting our pianist which was great. Hoping we shall all be reading these few lines in your paper. Thanking you,
THE TENANTS OF ST. MARTIN'S COURT, HERTFORD RD.

Alternative view

As Frank Fletcher in his article in the last De Beaver referred to our views, we think it is only right that we should put these views forward ourselves.

Yes, we do prefer having the children's play area in the centre of the Square rather than on Street corners. There is sufficient space there, and the surrounding trees and the distance from the houses would offer protection for adjoining tenants from noise or possible nuisance. There could be proper supervision for the children. The area could also be locked up at night and properly maintained.

As opposed to this, street corner amenities produce little space at great expense. Supervision is not envisaged, which puts the children at risk. Maintenance would be difficult as the amenities are literally on the street. One does not need a great deal of imagination to visualize all the possible uses of paddling pools! Nuisance to residents could also be a great problem; if children play in the street and get a little out of hand one can tell them to go somewhere else. But if they have street corner play areas specially provided they cannot be moved or controlled in any way, and it is always the same people who get the joy of it.

It has been suggested that people holding these views are "anti-children". We feel that this is a very unfair allegation when made by those who have no play amenities planned in front of their doorsteps. There is another aspect to this whole question, which

COUNCIL IMPROVES GIA HOUSES FOR FAMILIES

"Nice to see children around again", said an elderly lady in De Beauvoir Rd, as a mum and a crocodile of 4 children passed by. Not everybody's sentiments, perhaps, but what this particular lady had in mind was the past 15 years or so of planning blight in the southern area, which resulted in so many houses being left empty or under occupied.

Now all this is changing. Hackney Council, a major landlord in the area, has been obliged by the public inquiry decision on the southern area GIA to draw up an improvement programme. Ten houses are to be improved in the current programme, and contractors are now working on five. Eight of the ten houses are to be made into single family houses. It is a fair assumption that a similar proportion of the remaining dozen or so council owned houses in the area will be similarly improved for large families. As families will also be moving into privately-owned houses in the area, it is clear that the children are coming back fast - 30 this year already.

All this justifies the case for a variety of play facilities throughout the area, and particularly at road closures. It would be madness to close roads and then send young children to play in areas with unrestricted traffic.
FRANK FLETCHER

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LETTERS

is one of the character of the area. A lot of people feel that De Beauvoir is beautiful and spacious and that the amenities as proposed would clutter the space and spoil the character of the area.

We are in favour of road closures to be carried out with dignity and simplicity. We would like to see decent slab paving, not the black bitumen which, we observe, is often used. Street lamps, which at present are of the motorway-type (necessary for heavy road traffic) could be replaced by lamps more in keeping with the character of the streets, (as indeed they were represented to be in the drawings shown to residents) and we would like to see trees along the bare streets. We would like to see playgrounds in appropriate places.

Money comes into all this. We believe that the money we have available could provide all the above and make the area pleasant for all and something we could take pride in.

If however, we spend a lot of money on making amenities in unsuitable places we will run out of money and we'll end up with a hotch-potch which neither please the eye nor fulfil the local needs.

The situation at present is that the Committee decided to go ahead with the Central Area Scheme as shown to residents - that is without the play area in the Square. In view of the shortage of funds we suggested that the Committee should decide what the priorities are to be within the Central Area Scheme, bearing in mind that a play area in the centre of the Square will be a possibility within the next phase of improvements when more money will be available from Southern Area funds. (A further play area is also very likely to be coming up within the open space at the South end of Ufton Road). But the Committee was not prepared to trim the "shopping list" to the funds available. This could be done later, we were told.

A Resolution was then passed, which we believe is disastrous for the neighbourhood. The Resolution states that when priorities are considered (at some later date) the Committee's principle will be that aesthetics are to be disregarded in favour of play amenities. This utilitarian principle may possibly be valid in certain areas of pressing need, although even that is debatable. But it is not valid in De Beauvoir. The need for play areas is not so desperate as to justify the destruction of the aesthetic qualities of the neighbourhood.

Let us have play areas by all means. But in the right places. And at the right price - both in terms of money and in terms of the environment which is, after all, what we are supposed to be improving!

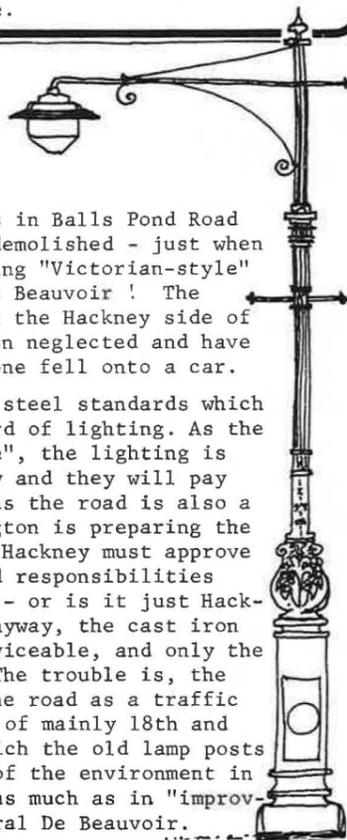
MARTA CLARE, JOHN CORNWELL, STAN MILLER, GWYN WILLIAMS, GEORGE SHEPHARD, J. CHILDS (members of the GIA Resident's Steering Committee)

EDITOR'S NOTE: The signatories of this letter, plus Mrs Pat Sugrue, have sent a 'minority report', to Hackney Council and the Department of the Environment. This letter is their digest of that report. De Beaver will report fully on the report in the next issue.

CAST OUT

The cast iron lamp posts in Balls Pond Road are in danger of being demolished - just when there is talk of providing "Victorian-style" lamp posts in central De Beauvoir! The wrought iron brackets on the Hackney side of Balls Pond Road have been neglected and have now been removed since one fell onto a car.

We are now promised new steel standards which will improve the standard of lighting. As the road is a "primary route", the lighting is the GLC's responsibility and they will pay for the new standards; as the road is also a borough boundary, Islington is preparing the new lighting scheme and Hackney must approve it. Perhaps the divided responsibilities have caused the neglect - or is it just Hackney's carelessness? Anyway, the cast iron standards are still serviceable, and only the brackets need renewal. The trouble is, the councils only look at the road as a traffic route and not as a road of mainly 18th and 19th century housing which the old lamp posts suit. We need to think of the environment in this sort of road just as much as in "improving" areas such as central De Beauvoir.





Mrs Parsons, of Culford Road, has loaned us this fine photograph of a Coronation party at the old Mortimer Arms in Mortimer Road 21 years ago. How many of these children are still living in the area - with children of their own? And do any of our readers have more interesting pictures like this which we can borrow?

PEOPLE

Too few Young lovers

Robin Young, known locally as secretary of the De Beauvoir Trust, was not as lucky as Ron Brown. Robin was Liberal candidate in Orpington and was reckoned to have a very good chance of winning this seat back from the Tories. But the Conservative held on in a close vote. Robin has been working for the Liberal cause in Orpington ever since 1962 and Eric Lubbock's famous by-election victory, but his opponent made much of the fact that he lived in the Balls Pond Road!

Good neighbours

Great party night at the Crown & Manor Club. Our thanks to Mic and Mary from the Talbot, John & Maria Pratt, our favourite singer Tom Barry who was accompanied by his wife Maureen, Fred who sang and his wife played the piano, Mr Compton gave a speech of thanks from our guests. Stan the greengrocer, Dennis the butcher, John Pratt & Tony Want, Mr Blankfield of SSE Co, gave presents. Charlie and Peggy, caretakers of the Crown & Manor Club helped in every way, Winnie Green did her best to make everyone join in the dancing. We must thank our girls on the committee, Nancy, Rae, Maud, Lidi, Sylvie, Ann, and Lil who with Lou Eaton helped from the beginning of this club and also to their husbands, Albert, Fred, Jim, Bill, and Richard. One thing crowned the night - Terry Shey and his brother-in-law Joe paid for three minicabs to take the ladies back to the Alms Houses in Balls Pond Rd. Best of luck to them. Also thanks to Jerry for playing for us after hours.

KATHY PRATT & MABEL HALL

Thanks Bill

De Beauvoir is to lose the valuable services of Bill Carlstrom - for the past 18 months Hackney's environmental improvement officer. Residents who attended the meetings in the crypt last year will remember Bill as the tall, bearded young man with the American accent. Bill is the person mainly responsible for the detailed drawings of the environmental improvement proposals for De Beauvoir (including the imaginative scheme for the use of the centre of the Square reported in the last De Beaver). Before leaving for Oregon with his wife and young daughter, Bill is going to take a look at Britain. He is also planning to write and illustrate a children's book based on his experiences in De Beauvoir.

Hijackers' friend!

Ron Brown, newly elected MP for the new constituency of Hackney South & Shoreditch (which includes De Beauvoir Town) talked to De Beaver last week and appealed for people to get in touch with him and let him know about local problems.

"I'm a full-time MP and I'm always available", he says. "My office number is 253 1556. If I'm not there, my agent will be, but anybody can ring me at the House of Commons, or at my home." He has been a local Labour Member for 10 years, but for this election his constituency boundary was revised to include the whole of De Beauvoir.

"I'm constantly trying to clear things up and improve the quality of life for people in my constituency", he says, "but I must rely on local people to let me know when and where things are going wrong." He is already familiar with many of the 'hardy perennial' nuisances of De Beauvoir. Some years ago, he pressed unsuccessfully for the closing of Picon's concrete works through compulsory purchase by the GLC or the government, but he intends to take up the problem of this and other non-conforming industrial users again now that he represents the area.

Illegal lorry and trailer parking and the use of the roadside for the loading of containers is another of his bugbears. "These people are making extra money out of their customers by using the streets as free garages and goods concentration depots", he points out.

As well as putting the police on to offending lorry owners, Mr Brown has used another more radical solution. "Once when the subject was being debated in the House, I addressed the hijacking fraternity, and told them exactly where to come and look for abandoned trailers. Before very long, goods worth £600,000 had been stolen from trailers parked in the area. The police and the insurers were very angry with me, but I had made my point with the hauliers."

JEREMY HAMAND

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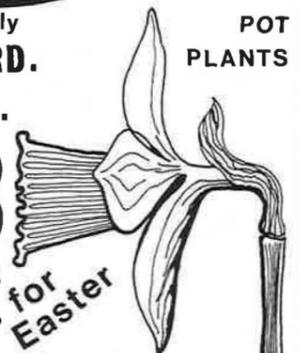
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COUNCIL OFFICERS RESPOND TO LOCAL IDEA CENTRE IN THE PARK

Hackney Council has asked local community associations to put forward a report on their plan to take over the old WRVS factory at 12 Ufton Rd. The three associations asked if they could use the factory temporarily, but Council officers have asked them to put up a plan for its permanent use as a community centre.

This exciting request was put forward by officers at the GIA residents' steering committee. Officers want to know if the centre could be run as a viable proposition if the Council let it to a joint community association, embracing old and new De Beauvoir, at a nominal rent.

The factory, which long-term residents will remember as the 'cellophane' or 'boot' factory, has 8 large 'halls' inside, lavatory facilities and so on, and could be used for a playgroup, youth club, disco, bingo, exhibitions, local meetings, etc. Funds for its transformation could possibly come from southern area GIA funds or an urban aid grant.

The factory is on the site of the small park which is to be created at the Downham Rd end of Ufton Rd. The

park would take in the two pre-fab sites and probably the closed-off end of Ufton Rd. The officers believe that a community centre and park together offer exciting prospects for imaginative ideas. The residents' committee agreed to ask the three associations to hold an 'open day' and exhibition at the factory to canvass local opinion and seek people's ideas.

The Southern Area Action Group's unofficial plan for the area also envisaged that Downham Rd could be closed and the park run over to the New Town. As the park is for the New Town as well as the southern area, access across a busy road has to be worked out carefully.

Meanwhile, 14 local people in Ufton and Culford Rds have signed a petition to the Council against the plan to make temporary use of the factory. They naturally fear that this would cause noise and inconvenience. Any long-term plan for this area will have to consider very seriously any possible inconvenience to local people.

STUART WEIR

Motorway threat?

The De Beauvoir Association have backed Hackney Council's formal opposition to the proposal by the Department of the Environment to build a motorway link from the M11 at Woodford to Hackney Wick at the edge of Victoria Park. The DBA objection is that it will provide further encouragement for additional traffic (particularly commuters) to drive into London whilst making no provision for the traffic when it leaves the motorway at the Wick.

As far as De Beauvoir Town is concerned, the link can only encourage more traffic onto the Graham Rd/Balls Pond Rd route to Holloway and the M1, and ultimately create the argument for even more motorways or drastic road improvements across the north of the area.

Summer Fayre

Eileen Cox, secretary of the New Town Tenant's Assoc, has asked us to let everyone know that the New Town's Summer Fayre this year is to be on August 3. She's hoping that it will be even more spectacularly successful than last year's popular event, and wants suggestions and offers of help. Contact her at 39 Lanresse Court, N.1.

Lindley's are moving out of their factory behind Nos 1-4 Southgate Grove on March 31. Apparently it has been sold to an unknown buyer who wishes to use it for light industry. Lindley's have never been an industrial nuisance - we hope that their successors will have an equal record.

small ads

SMALL ADS are free to local people & 5p a word for commercial advertisers. Display ads are £1.25 a column in. Please send all ads to Jo Parsey, at 45 Buckingham Rd, by May 20th for next issue.

JUMBLE SALE for Dorleston Court, and Elder Citizens. To be held on Saturday the 30th of March at 2 p.m. at the Community Hut, at the rear of Rozel Court. Admission 3p. Teas and coffee.

SUGAWN KITCHEN THEATRE at the Duke of Wellington, 119 Balls Pond Road. Every Friday - Universal Folk Evening. Every Sat and Sun - The Sugawn Ballad Scene. Approx. 5 plays are presented each year. Acting, technical & helping members are very welcome. Directors wishing to use the Theatre for their own productions should contact Frank Corkery or J. M. O'Neill. Phone 254-1458

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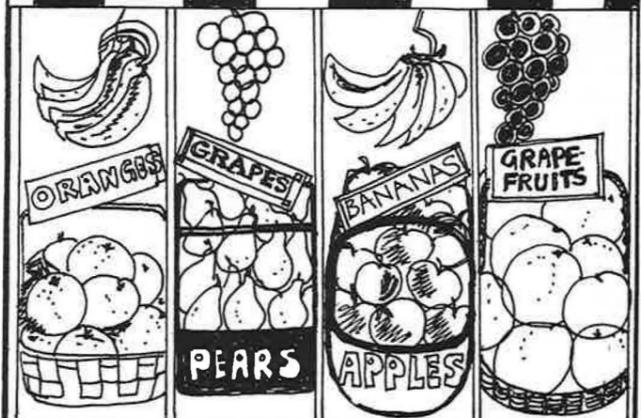
At the De Beauvoir Association AGM in November the following officers were elected unanimously:- Chairman, Graham Parsey; vice-chairman, Alan Rayner; secretary, Liz Paton; treasurer, Joe Bray; press officer, Jeremy Hamand; membership secretary, Doris Kibblewhite; distribution officer, Frank Fletcher. The motion, proposed by Graham Parsey, 'that no person could hold the office of Chairman for more than 2 successive terms' was unanimously approved.

DE
Beaver

137 BALLS POND ROAD N1

is a FREE community newspaper for the people of De Beauvoir - old & new towns. We are sponsored by the De Beauvoir Association, but we're here for everyone, not just association members - so please send us your news, pictures, ideas, criticisms (by May 20th for the next issue). Thanks to everyone who has helped ge out this issue and deliver it round the area.

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