

New Town rents muddle

Tenants on the New Town estate were surprised to get letters from Hackney Town Hall, notifying them that their rents would be reduced - and inviting them to object! But it was no surprise when the Rent Office still wanted the high rents they have been paying since the 90p-a-week increases last October.

The answer is that these new rents are the "provisional fair rents" which the Council are bound to assess under the Government's Housing Finance Act. Tenants have two months in which to make representations about these rents and they will then be sent to the Rent Scrutiny Board which will finally fix new "fair rents" for all Hackney council homes.

Hackney's "provisional fair rents" have been fixed at 70 per cent of gross values (the rating values) of Hackney council homes. This makes them lower than the "fair rents" which the Government wants under the Housing Finance Act, and the Rent Scrutiny Board will almost certainly raise the rents to a higher level. If the Board raises the rents which Hackney submit, tenants have a second chance to object. But it obviously helps if tenants would give their views about the "provisional fair rents".

Meanwhile, Hackney Council voted for a rent freeze for council homes at a special council meeting in August - which means, at the moment, that the Council won't be increasing rents by 50p a week in October as they are obliged to do under the Housing Finance Act. Of our ward councillors, Cllr Jim Warner voted for the rent freeze, and Cllrs Mrs. Florence Newill and John Hulstrom voted against. The Council met again on September 26th and may well have reversed the vote for the rent freeze.

TARDY RENT HUT

Hackney Council promised the newly revived New Town Tenants' Association in May that they would erect a pre-fab community hall for temporary use within two months. What they did not say was that they would open it - nor that the 'pre-fab' hall was only going to be the old rent hut tarted up! The old rent hut is to be turned into a temporary hall, but amenities such as lavatories, etc., have still not been supplied and four months later the hut remains closed. The temporary hall should have been ready in time for the New Town fete. Instead, the Tenants' Association had to chance an open-air affair, and put the disco in a tent. Mrs Eileen Cox, Secretary of the Tenants' Association, has written to Cllr Lily Karpin, Labour's chief whip, who stated personally that the temporary hall would be ready in two months, to ask that the temporary hut should be provided immediately - bearing in mind that a permanent hall will possibly be open next year. Cllr Jim Warner is to raise the matter at the next meeting of the Labour Group on the Council.

ODE TO HACKNEY BOROUGH COUNCIL CONCERNING PRE-FAB SITES

De Beauvoir Road and Ardleigh Road, Hertford, Upton and Mortimer too, Sites vacant now for many months, But no news yet from 'you know who'.

Put up they were for ten years score, But there for twenty five or more! They then were taken down quite fast For permanent homes we thought at last?

Why the vacant sites so long? Is building houses doing wrong? Is housing land in short supply When sites stand idle, God knows why!

It's really not a cause for rhyme; The Council have no sense of time. I look forward to their reply, If possible before I die

DE BEAUVOIR RESIDENT

DORLESTON COURT HOME FOR YOUNGER PHYSICALLY HANDICAPPED - 81 Downham Road, N.1. Please come and join us and meet the residents at our Coffee Morning on Saturday October 13th 9.30 am to 12 noon. All welcome and bring a friend. Coffee and biscuits 5p.

GORGEOUS GIGGLE



De Beauvoir New Town was gaily en fete on Saturday 1st September. For the first time ever all those wasteful grassed and paved squares and oblongs (too small for real play areas, too big for decorating with flowers and shrubs) came into their own as sites for an exciting and colourful variety of side shows and events, which went on from 11 am to early evening.

The Mayor (Cllr Owen) was there to start the balls rolling, and Ron Brown, M.P., accompanied by popular local beat bobby, Maurice Winters, to judge the children's painting competition. A policeman (he may live to regret it!) gave impromptu lessons in unarmed combat to some tough looking local lads, while postmen - decked out in lovely uniforms from 1840 onwards - showed off their replica 1910 mail van to appreciative onlookers. A further colourful touch was given by members of the Medieval Society using real long and crossbows. Intrigued spectators had several 'arrowing (ouch!) experiences when some locals took advantage of the invitation to have a go.

The two really big events were the pram race (don't be fooled - those dear little bristly faces under lacey caps, swigging pints as the race progressed from pub to pub, were all over eighteen), and the ladies football match. We don't know who won what, but it was all a gorgeous giggle.

FRANK FLETCHER

A Real Home for Handicapped

Four months ago Dorleston Court, Downham Road, opened as a home for younger physically handicapped people. The idea is new and experimental; Hackney and Tower Hamlets being the only two London boroughs to actually realise the need. Mr. Baker is Acting Superintendent and Dorleston Court runs rather like a hotel. It has 23 single rooms and 2 double rooms each with a bed, chest of drawers, wardrobe and wash basin. Because it is also a home (for that it what they have made it) for 21 people (it can house 27) it has a large laundry room, canteen and all the facilities, adapted to suit the varying needs of its handicapped residents. Each person is encouraged to do as much as they can. There are degrees of incapacity - some managing to go out to work, others spending their day in the workshop of the house or doing what they can enjoy. Because Dorleston Court is newly opened and the residents are just beginning to get to know each other, initially they are forming a committee with the intention of becoming a community which in time will form a part of the community of De Beauvoir.

On this first visit I got the impression that everyone is enjoying the life Dorleston Court is offering, and I hope for the next issue of De Beaver to talk to the residents and hear their views and find out more about the people - because home is what they are making it.

LIZ FLETCHER

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COUNCIL IMPROVE OWN PROPERTIES?

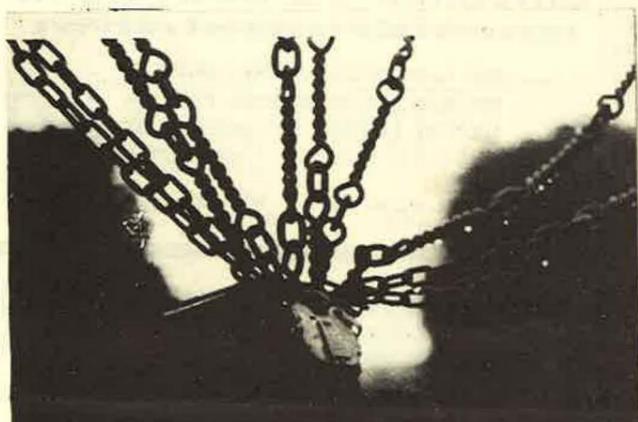
The council is now definitely committed to a programme of improvement of their own properties in the southern area GIA. Twelve houses have been selected for the first stage and work will commence later this year. The houses are: 54, 63, 64, 65 & 68 De Beauvoir Road, 56 & 102 Downham Road, 52 & 54 Southgate Road and 49, 55 & 89 Mortimer Road.

Congratulations on the move must be limited to two cheers: there is still no hard news on what is to happen to the remaining dozen or so council owned houses in the area (the Council is still negotiating with Brown & Brown about possible exchanges), and there are no guarantees that the proposed improvement policies will result in local 'decanting'.

The Council's plan for the redevelopment of the vacant pre-fab sites, and other council owned land on the east side of Ufton Road (announced in the last De Beaver) has now been shelved.

This news was given to the September meeting of the GIA steering committee, which resolved unanimously to press the council to exploit this opportunity for providing a really good-sized open space (which could benefit both the old and new parts of De Beauvoir without the need to demolish any houses) by closing Ufton Road at its junction with Downham Road by linking the two old pre-fab sites. This would still leave some land for new, sympathetic housing development on the east side of Ufton Road. Before a final decision is taken, SAAG and the De Beauvoir Association will press the Council to ask local people what they think about the proposals.

FRANK FLETCHER



Padlocked Swings

Frank Fletcher phoned the Parks Department to complain that two out of the four pieces of equipment in De Beauvoir Square children's playground had been out of use for most of the summer. "We're sorry about it", said the voice from the other end, "... but we have got it in hand". "But when will the swings and horse be put in use" said Mr. Fletcher. "We'll get on with it as quickly as we can", replied the voice, "you see, we've only one blacksmith".

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SUMMER 'VENTURE



Soon after we opened the wasted Council land at the bottom of Ufton Road as a playground, we realised that it could not be supervised by voluntary effort throughout the school holidays; someone would have to be paid for such a thankless task. One Neil Martinson volunteered to help out over Whitsun half-term, and we asked him to do it over the summer. He obviously couldn't manage on his own, and we contacted various organisations. Eventually Sally Topsom arrived from rural Devon by courtesy of Community Service Volunteers. They organised trips to the Science Museum and Epping Forest without loss of life. On some of those days which proved the hottest for years, when the dust of De Beauvoir and the playground must have got up their noses, they took some of the kids swimming. One whole heroic day's outing by coach was arranged to Arundel Castle and Littlehampton (by the sea).

We can only thank Neil and Sally for their hard work and enthusiasm; but the only important tribute comes from the kids themselves - when are Sally and Neil coming back? Unfortunately they can't. We do have a new volunteer from CSV, Penny Dukes, who will be running the playground, but we desperately need local people to help out at weekends. If you can help, even if it's only for an hour, PLEASE get in touch with Penny at the playground or ring 249-5646. P.S. Thanks to the 1972 New Town Tenants' Association for their donation of £25 which was most welcome.

RICHARD PATON

**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 Nov. 19th for the next issue). Thanks to everyone who has helped get out this issue and deliver it round the area.

smallads

SMALL ADS are free to local people & 5p a word for commercial advertisers. Display ads are £1.25 a column inch. Please send all ads to Jo Parsey, at 45 Buckingham Rd, N1, by November 15th for next issue.

GEFFRYE MUSEUM, Kingsland Rd. The Art Deco Exhibition. 19th Sept - 28th Oct. The first London showing of the Victoria & Albert Museum Travelling Exhibition. Open 10am-5pm Tues to Sat. 2pm-5pm Sunday. Museum closed on Monday. Entrance free.

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GOOD NEIGHBOURS CLUB are holding a Mini Fair in aid of OAPs party. Entrance fee 5p (Lucky Number Prize). Sat. Oct 13th 2pm in the garden at 51 Ufton Road. All are welcome. Xmas cards for Mentally Handicapped Society on sale also.

A WATER COLOUR picture of your home or a De Beauvoir scene for a Christmas present? Contact Doffy Weir, 137 Balls Pond Rd (254-5768).

JOIN the De Beauvoir Association. Contact Alan Rayner, 7 Ufton Road.

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