

THE COCKPIT

NEWSLETTER OF THE CHISLEHURST RESIDENTS' ASSOCIATION

The Cockpit, on Chislehurst Common, has been the traditional meeting place for Chislehurst people on all great occasions from time immemorial.

PRESIDENT

T. A. BUSHELL, M.C.I.T.

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A. T. C. JONES, B.A.

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R. W. OBLATH

SECRETARY

A. L. DRAGE, A.H.A.,
4 Stainmore Close,
Chislehurst, Kent
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VICE-CHAIRMAN

K. H. SEDGWICK, B.A.

No. 19

November, 1975

RATES

THE HEAVY INCREASE of 55% in rate demands came as a severe shock to all householders in the London Borough of Bromley, and the general concern was heightened by the threat of further increases next year.

This Association had been taking action over this serious situation since 1974, as described later in these notes: recently we decided that such an important issue warranted greater public participation, and we arranged a Public Meeting at which the public could question their Council members.

This meeting was held in the Methodist Hall, Chislehurst, on October 8. Mr. E. D. Barkway, Leader of the Council, was the principal speaker, supported by Councillors A. F. Parkinson, C. C. S. Reeves and Mrs. J. Bryant. Mr. A. T. C. Jones, Chairman of our Association, was in the chair; Mr. Mack, Chairman of the Bromley Residents' Federation, and Mrs. Newport-Gwilt, President of the Chislehurst Chamber of Trade, were also present. Altogether over 300 people attended, and the hall was packed to overflowing.

Mr. T. Bushell, President of the Association, opened the proceedings and invited Mr. Jones to take over.

Mr. Jones welcomed the audience and introduced the Councillors and Officers of the Association on the platform. He read an apology for absence from Mr. Roger Sims, our M.P., and from Alderman Mrs. Gunn. He described the action the Association had already taken in connection with the problem of rising rates—in organising, collating and stencilling suggestions from members for Borough economy and sending them, on December 17 1974, to the Town Clerk, and to 70 Councillors and Aldermen: also in arranging a meeting on June 18 1975 between officers of the Association and the Town Clerk and Mr. Barkway to discuss the issue, and at which meeting Mr. Barkway offered to address our members. A reply was later received from the Chief Executive dated July 22 1975 dealing in detail with our economy suggestions: of the 29 suggestions 21 had been implemented, but the measures that had been adopted by the Borough were put into force after the rate demand had been calculated and the effect

of them could not be fully apparent until 1976/7. He said he would put a resolution to the vote at the end of the meeting, but in the meantime he had great pleasure in inviting Councillor Barkway to speak.

Councillor Barkway said he was delighted to have the opportunity to speak to residents of Chislehurst. He explained that as Leader of the Council he had no special powers, other than the right of taking part in all Council sub-committees. He was and always had been a strong advocate of cuts in Borough expenditure and had played a leading part in pressing this policy on other members. The problem was to give ratepayers value for the rates they pay, in providing essential services, without permitting unnecessary expenditure. He had been pleased to have our 29 suggestions and was in full agreement with the 21 which had been adopted.

In November 1974 the Government had decided that budgets of local authorities could have a level of growth in real money not exceeding 4.3%: this Borough had kept to 4% in real money. In May 1975 the Government said the level of growth for 1976/7 should be restricted to 2.9% in real money. Mr. Barkway considered this wrong and against some opposition he had argued successfully that the figure should be a growth of nil. In September 1975 his views were vindicated, as the Government said that the rate of growth for 1976/7 and probably also for 1977/8 must be revised to 0%.

As regards next year, he gave an assurance that the Council would do their best to cut expenditure, to hit the greedy and not the needy. He emphasised that of the expenditure controlled by the Borough 65% was in wages and salaries, and said that unless there was a real drop in the national rate of inflation there must be some increase in rates next year and that sacrifices were necessary by all.

The Chairman then invited questions from those present.

Twenty-three members of the public posed questions to the Councillors.

One of the most important points concerned the large increase of 80% in Greater London Council precepts, and questions concerning this were asked

by Messrs. Mack, Drage, Worthington and Biggart. Mr. Barkway said he had taken advice on the feasibility of refusing to pay the G.L.C. precept and the answer was that under Statute we could not do this. He quoted in full the strong Resolution he had piloted through the Council Meeting on September 29 calling the G.L.C. to review and curb its expenditure so that for the year 1976/7 it does not exceed the Government guidelines, failing which representations would be made through the London Boroughs Association to the Government for a complete revision of the Local Government Act 1963 as regards the role and function of the G.L.C. Mr. Drage, reading from the Act, quoted legislation providing for a Borough to refuse to pay the G.L.C. precept, in which case the Government could appoint a Receiver, and Mr. Barkway said he would look into this.

Various members of the audience, including Messrs. Snocken, Cunnell, Rawlinson, Payne and Cross raised points concerning economy. In dealing with these questions Mr. Barkway said the Borough is moving in the right direction—this year capital expenditure of £1,300,000 has been saved, cutting it to nearly nil. He went on to say that the Borough employed 11,800 people: in order to reduce this number the Council had decided on a policy of:

No new posts;

No automatic replacement of staff who leave or retire;

Redeployment of staff;

Where possible, early retirement.

Questions concerning the Churchill Theatre were asked by Mrs. Salmon, Mrs. Bentley and Mr. Mills, and the answer was that a long detailed statement concerning theatre finances was being prepared and would be available to the public.

Mr. Parkinson, in answering a written question asking why the Borough did not recycle waste paper as other Boroughs do profitably, said the short answer to this was that it is *not* profitable: he quoted fluctuating paper prices saying the cost to the Borough of collecting waste paper would be more than the sum realised by its sale. This statement was challenged by Mr. Drage.

Mr. Barkway dealt with Mr. Polack's proposal that there should be a discount for prompt payment of rates by stating that there was quite a high level of payment in the first few months, and that the Borough did not require *all* their rates at the beginning of the year. Nevertheless this suggestion would be kept under review.

Queries concerning street lighting, by Messrs. Grimwood and Rawlinson, were answered by Mr. Parkinson. In view of problems in the past during power cuts, the Borough had been converting street lamps to the photo electric cell system, and 65/70% were so activated: it was not possible to superimpose a time switch on these, and instead one third of street lights had been turned off, for economy.

Amongst other items discussed were Biggin Hill Airport, council house rents, parking in Walden Road, squatters, and the Chislehurst Station crossing of Summer Hill.

The Chairman then put to the Meeting the following Resolution proposed by the Association Committee:

"This Public Meeting deplores the increase in the rate made for 1975 at a level of 55% and urges the Council to control expenditure to ensure that there is no increase for 1976/7."

This was passed with acclamation, with one vote against.

Mr. Sedgwick, Vice-Chairman of the Association, gave a hearty vote of thanks to the Chairman, the four Councillors, the public present and the Press.

The Village Hall. It is gratifying to know that at the same time as our Executive Committee decided to inform St. Nicholas Parochial Church Council that the burnt out hall should be rebuilt as a hall for community purposes, they were deciding to take that course of action and not applying for change of use of the site for housing or other use, as some had suggested. The Church Council has now arranged a Public Meeting in Village Hall Annexe in the evening of Tuesday, December 9 1975, to view plans and discuss the proposal, to which all Chislehurst people are invited. Not so gratifying is the news about the water provision at the scene of the fire. A report from a reliable source stated this was inadequate, but on enquiry Headquarters London Fire Brigade stated it to be satisfactory. Further enquiry revealed facts which conflict with Brigade Headquarters statement and the whole matter of water supplies in this part of Chislehurst is being pursued.

Bulls Head—Tigers Head—Traffic etc., Irregularities. No improvement is apparent. From time to time it worsens. Approaches to the police have been abortive but are being pursued. Meanwhile local residents should telephone the police on every grievance whether traffic obstruction, public misbehaviour or other reason. The police say they attend such calls if warranted but find it difficult to act if notified after the event. They also say their manning levels do not permit the cover desired. The public can render practical help by enlisting as Special Constables. Information leaflets and applications are obtainable from Inspector *Donker*, Chislehurst Police Station.

Heavy Lorry Bans—Local Scheme. The Borough Council's decision to erect barriers at certain points locally, again stated to be "imminent", has not yet materialised.

Old Hill. The survey of accidents and incidents, requested at the A.G.M., has been completed and submitted to the Borough Council and to G.L.C., with full support. It is a very detailed document touching on most if not all, arguments for and against closure, finally advocating closure. A copy may be seen by any member on application to the Secretary or to Mr. R. Inglis, 7 Old Hill.

High Street Development. A meeting of the Association's Planning Sub-Committee, with a spokesman for local residents and the developers, took place on October 7, to discuss the recent planning application 19/75/2431. This is the second instance in which developers have sought the opinions of the Association—the other being the Woodclyffe development. While the plans are an improvement on those previously refused (and the appeal dismissed), and some measure of agreement has now been reached, they

were told of some unacceptable features, some of which they promised to review. Meanwhile the Association's formal objections have been lodged with the Council. Members' individual objections have also been lodged. Our request that the developers clean and enclose the derelict site was declined, because they think building will commence before the middle of next year. Your committee does not share that view and further approaches on this aspect have now been made direct to the Borough Council to invoke their powers.

Bromley Consumers' Group. This Association is a corporate member and many individuals are members. The Group's regular newsletters and quarterly magazine *Watchdog* contain much valuable information about a very wide range of consumer matters and we strongly recommend our members to interest themselves in the publications and the Group's activities generally. Their membership secretary is Miss M. Phillips, 33 Rochester Way, Bromley; the Area Representative, Mrs. B. Wright, Woodcot, Old Hill, Chislehurst. It is a non-profit-making and non-political organisation. The annual subscription is £1.50 or £2 for two in the same household.

Planning. The Borough Council announced that as an economy measure, notification of planning applications to neighbours who might be affected—and previously sent liberally—is to be suspended for an experimental three months commencing September 1 1975. There is no guarantee that they and other non-statutory notifications will be resumed after November 30 1975. Members are again advised to inspect the weekly lists of planning applications at Chislehurst Library, lest they hear too late of a development which they would have objected to, had they known.

Bromley Federation of Residents' Associations comprises 34 affiliated associations in the Borough, of which Chislehurst is one of the largest. The Federation handles a considerable volume and variety of work with, and on behalf of, all associations. This is done by their Chairman, Secretary and a small Executive Committee who service the bi-monthly Federation meeting of the 34 associations. We are urgently asked to request all our members to come forward to assist that small team in their very heavy load of administrative and clerical work. No qualifications are necessary—only reliability and a willingness to assist. If you are a "specialist" in one subject, so much the better. We owe it to the Federation to provide some help additional to our nominated delegate. Please send your name to, or enquire further of, our Secretary (page — 1).

The Water Tower Seat

THE WATER TOWER stood astride the top of Summer Hill from 1860 until demolished by the Chislehurst and Sidcup Urban District Council in 1963. No less than 2,400 people petitioned for its retention because it was the gateway to Chislehurst and was unique of its kind; but Sidcup wanted a double-deck bus service to Bromley (so they said) so down came the tower. It was the last straw in a movement calling for the separation of Chislehurst

from Sidcup and this action by the latter's councillors brought another petition, this time successful, to the Government to separate the two places.

The demolition, in May 1963, attracted the attention of BBC Television on which it was stated that this was not an ancient monument, this writer replying that if all monuments were demolished after 100 years there never could be an ancient one.

The stone armorial shields were saved and a competition opened for a seat which would incorporate one of them. It was won by Mr. Fred Snocken whose design, however, was rejected by the Borough Conservation Advisory Committee who substituted another. Although £265 was collected, no one could be found to erect the seat for that sum and so the scheme remained in abeyance until Messrs. Wates undertook the work for the money in hand. This was a generous gesture, but difficulties have arisen as the work, at the time of writing, does not conform to specification.

We have waited twelve years. We must still be patient.

Membership of the Association

Our Hon. Treasurer writes:

IN MARCH of this year I was able to report, with much pleasure, that our membership had increased to 2,190, and to pass to Road Stewards the thanks of the Committee for their hard work in achieving this result.

You will be fully aware from articles in the Press and in this issue that we are involved in several big campaigns, and there is no need for me to stress the importance of items such as Rates and High Street development. You will also have noted that, as the result of our vigilance in opposing unsuitable development in Chislehurst, on two recent occasions developers have shown and discussed their plans with us before submitting them to the Council, and this is truly an admirable achievement.

To maintain success in this difficult field we need two conditions, firstly, more members so that we are fully representative of the residents of Chislehurst and so that we have the benefit of more opinions in deciding what action to take, and secondly we need an assured income to meet the rising cost of postage, hire of halls, printing, advertising, stationery, etc.

May I once again ask our Road Stewards to make a drive for new members, stressing the importance of the present problems and stressing that the annual subscription has been kept low to aid widespread membership. Subscriptions collected now from *new* members may be allowed to count up to December 31 1976.

To readers of this issue, if you are a paid up member I thank you for your support. If you are not a member, or if your membership has lapsed, our annual subscription is:

Individual membership	20p
Household membership	40p
O.A.P.s	10p

and we should welcome you in the fold. Elsewhere in this issue there is an enrolment form and a list of

Road Stewards: if you will contact the one most convenient to you he/she will be delighted to enrol you in our Association. Some roads in Chislehurst are not at present covered by specific Road Stewards: this means that there are vacancies for Road Stewards—why not give me a ring at 01-467 3351 when I shall be pleased to discuss the matter.

LIST OF ROAD STEWARDS

(Members of C.R.A. Committee marked *)

- Mr. F. W. Baker*, 1 The Chestnuts, St. Pauls Cray Road (responsible for Royal Parade).
- **Mrs. J. Barker*, 24 Hatton Court, Lubbock Road (Hatton Court).
- Mrs. P. Barrett*, 11 Oakleigh Park Avenue (Summer Hill and roads off (except Ravenshill, Isleworth Close and Cricket Ground Road), Prince Imperial Road and roads off).
- Mrs. D. H. Bell*, 7 Lubbock Road (Camden Park Road).
- Mr. J. Bentley*, 19 Adelaide Road (Edward, Alexander and Adelaide Roads, Woodside Avenue).
- Mrs. H. T. Brown*, 30 Grove Vale (Grove Vale).
- Mr. B. G. Coffin*, Riders Way, Ashfield Lane (Ashfield and Heathfield Lanes).
- Mrs. A. Cucher*, 5 Ravenshill (Ravenshill, Isleworth Close).
- Mrs. Davis*, 36 Marlings Park Avenue (Nos. 31 onwards Marlings Park Avenue).
- **Mr. A. Drage*, Meadowbrook, 4 Stainmore Close (Hollybrake Close, Bull Lane, Shepherds Green, Sturges Field, Bromley Lane, Church Row, Walnut Tree Close).
- Mrs. Douglas*, 7 Chesil House, St. Pauls Cray Road (Manor Park).
- Mr. V. Dunleavy*, 21 Sandy Ridge (Sandy Ridge, The Weald).
- **Mr. C. M. Dunn*, Hoblands Cottage, Kemnal Road (Kemnal Road, Marlowe Close).
- Mr. T. Grimwood*, 7 Farmland Walk (Farmland Walk, Hill Close).
- Mrs. M. Grundy*, 27 Lubbock Road (Lower half Lubbock Road).
- Mrs. U. Hawkins*, Fircroft, Oakwood Close (Oakwood Close, Yester Road).
- Miss K. Humphreys*, 25 Downs Avenue (Downs Avenue, Fosters Close, Hallam Close, Melanda Close).

- **Mr. A. T. C. Jones*, 10 Thistlemead (Heatherbank, Thistlemead).
- Mrs. Jones*, 10 Thistlemead (Cricket Ground Road and roads off).
- **Mr. J. Kinsella*, Crayside, Rectory Meadow, Manor Park Road (St. Paul's Cray Road).
- Mrs. Koe*, The Orchard, Leas Green (Perry Street and roads off except Homewood Crescent).
- Mr. V. Leonard*, 5 Kincaig, Lubbock Road (Lubbock Road, upper half).
- **Mr. S. W. Mack*, Little Maxby's, Raggleswood (Raggleswood).
- Mr. A. W. McKenzie*, C.B.E., 5 Lubbock Road (Yester Park).
- Mr. E. L. May*, 52 Greenway (Greenway).
- **Mr. R. W. Oblath*, 36 Lower Camden (Lower Camden).
- Mrs. Payne*, 13 The Glebe (The Glebe, Bishops Walk, Manor Park Road).
- Mrs. Philo*, 12 Ingleby Way (Ingleby Way, Red Hill).
- Mrs. Price*, 6 Ivybridge Court, Old Hill (Old Hill, Chislehurst Road).
- Mr. A. H. Proud*, 10a Wilderness Road (Wilderness Road).
- Mr. A. J. Ramsay*, 19 Homewood Crescent (Homewood Crescent).
- **Mr. S. Rawlings Smith*, O.B.E., 2 Heathfield (Heathfield and roads off).
- **Mr. K. H. Sedgwick*, "Nant Gwyn", Hawkwood Lane (Crown Lane, Camden Close, Morley Road, Hawkwood Lane, School Road).
- Mr. A. Sharpe*, 8 Willow Vale (Willow Vale, Empress Drive, and Willow Grove from Willow Vale to High St.).
- Mr. H. T. A. Sharpe*, 37 Westhurst Drive (Rest of Willow Grove, Beechcroft).
- **Mr. F. Snocken*, 18 Westhurst Drive (Westhurst Drive).
- Mr. A. H. Strutt*, "Barnoon", Camden Way, Camden Park Road (Camden Way).
- Mr. T. L. Twigg*, 23 Poyntell Crescent (Poyntell Crescent, Holbrook Lane).
- Mr. D. Vivian*, 30 Highfield Road (Leasons Hill, Southfield Road, The Drive, Sunnyfield Road, Highfield Road, St. Paul's Wood Hill).
- Mr. J. L. Williams*, 23 Berens Way (Berens Way).
- Mrs. C. M. Willmott*, Mead Cottage, Mead Road (Mead Road).

CHISLEHURST RESIDENTS' ASSOCIATION

To (member of the committee/road steward)

or

To the Manager, Barclays Bank Ltd., 7 High Street, Chislehurst.

Please receive subscriptions to the above Association (household 40p, individual member 20p, O.A.P. 10p)

Name If a new member, please tick:.....

Address

Subscriptions may also be sent direct to the Hon. Treasurer at 36 Lower Camden, Chislehurst.