

Your

Mr. Smith
6 C Street

Westbourne Neighbourhood Association

Newsletter 1.

Good News

Much has happened in this neighbourhood since the public meeting on January 16th. If New Year forecasts had been made, I doubt if the optimists would have suggested a turn-out of more than 100. The proposals to pull down Moorhouse Road to provide a site for a new school and the proposal to extend Great Western Road led to a meeting of well over 300. Councillors and officers must have been surprised at the size and sound of that meeting.

Out of that meeting our Association has grown. Our foundation meeting on January 31st gave us our rules and constitution. Following this our immediate task was to make clear to the Council Committee concerned our opposition to the Moorhouse Road school site and the Great Western Road extension. This we did at the beginning of February by petition and letter. This Council Committee (a joint meeting of the Highways and Works and Town Planning Committees) agreed to reconsider the proposals to extend the road and to give local residents an opportunity to discuss alternatives. Members and others continued to write to the Council, the Greater London Council, and the Department of the Environment and to press our views. On March 12th the City Council agreed to a proposal to object to the proposed Moorhouse Road site and to explore alternatives, and to a proposal not to implement the road extension pending examination of alternatives and public consultation.

In April, Alderman Sandford, the Chairman of the City Highways and Works Committee, the Chief Planning Officer, Mr Hirsch, the Deputy Engineer, Mr Cope, and other Council Officers, met a delegation from the Association, I, as your Chairman, together with Gerald Cinamon, Stephan Colback and Frederick Stafford put forward our opposition to the Moorhouse Road school site and the extension of Great Western Road. We also suggested the keeping of the present road pattern but with improvements for pedestrian safety. We suggested that the school could and should go on the site of the road extension, which could also include a communal playground and public open space.

The proposed extension of Great Western Road has now been dropped. The City Council have accepted a report of a joint

meeting of the Highways and Works and Town Planning Committees which recommends as a first preference that the new school be built on the site now available as a result of abandoning the road extension.

The other suggestions made at the April meeting have also been investigated and accepted for consideration by the Council. A public exhibition of alternative schemes is being prepared by the Council and will be held locally in mid-July.

We are not, and have never been, against the rebuilding of St Mary of the Angels School. At the public meeting in January I moved the resolution which, in objecting to the Moorhouse Road site, recognized the urgent necessity to rebuild the school. I believe that our suggestion, if adopted, will bring the rebuilding of the school much sooner.

Although our immediate concern was and is the school site and the road extension, our aims and objects are much wider and embrace all matters which affect our members and the place we live or work in. None of what has so far been achieved could have been done without the active support of all of you. By letter and petition you have shown the Council that there is strong and widespread concern at the original proposals; by recruiting many members to the Association you have enabled the Committee and the delegation to the Council to be able to claim, rightly, to speak on behalf of the area as a whole and the people who live and work here. Our local shopkeepers have been very strong in their support.

Frequently, I and Committee members are stopped in the street or telephoned and asked about a variety of problems concerning individuals and the neighbourhood. On July 2nd our first general meeting of the Association takes place at the Westbourne Grove Baptist Church Hall at 8.30 p.m. That will be your opportunity, together with friends and other new members, to come along and discuss local problems and proposals and to hear the latest situation on the school and road proposals and to raise all the other questions which you have raised individually.

Howard Aplin
Chairman, WNA

Meeting

If you care about how you live and where you live remember to come to this meeting. Bring your friends, bring your neighbours, your news, your views, your suggestions on how the WNA can best help all of us.

Monday, July 2nd. First general meeting of the WNA
Westbourne Grove Baptist Church
(corner of Westbourne Grove and Ledbury Road)
Meeting starts at 8.30. BE THERE!

Councillors Praise WNA

On Monday, June 11th, at the Westminster City Council meeting, when a full assembly was present, your WNA observers were delighted and surprised by the praise given by councillors from both political parties to the Westbourne Neighbourhood Association.

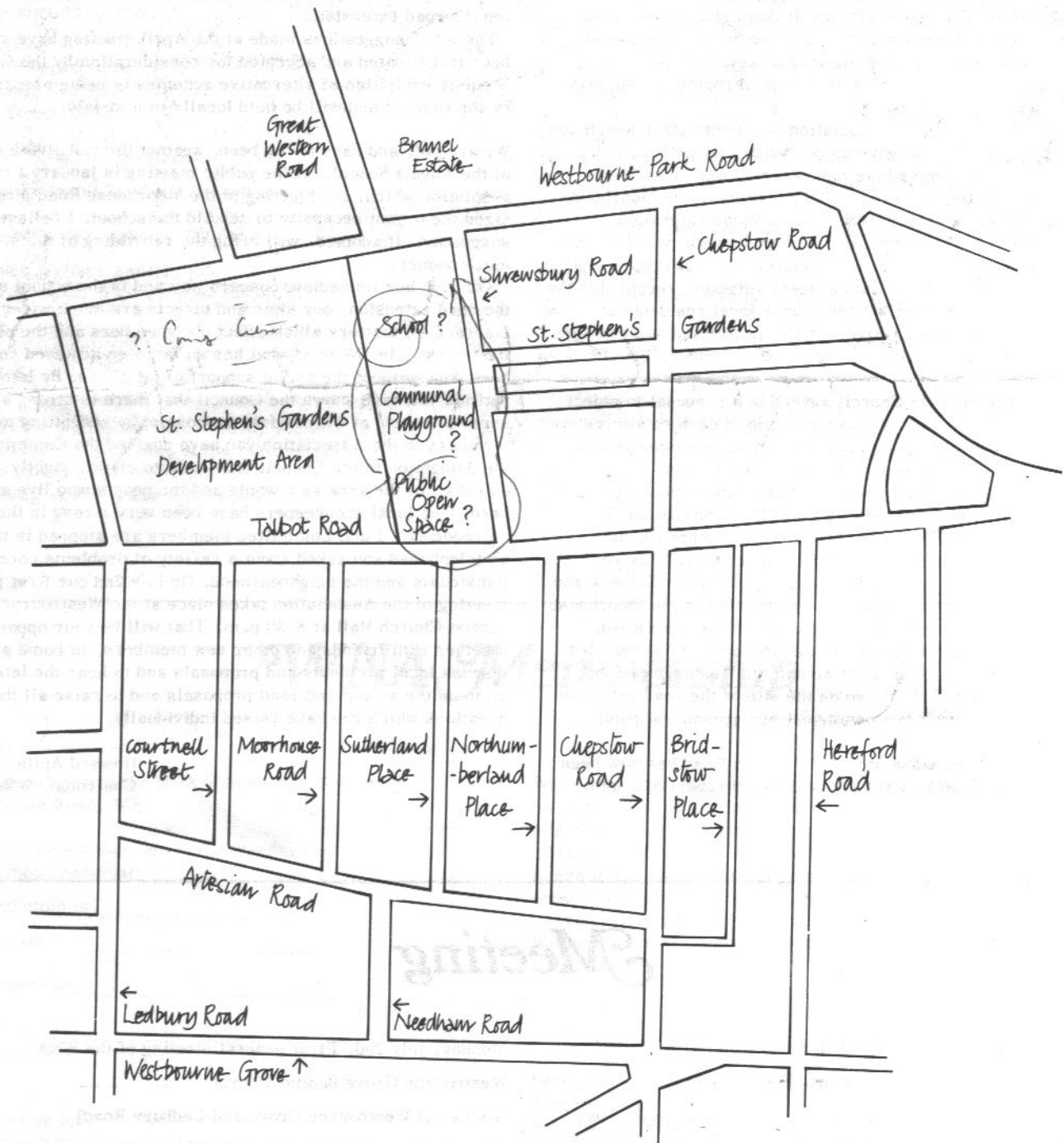
This arose during the discussion concerning the report of the Joint Meeting of the Highways and Works and Town Planning Committees, in which they recommended as their first preference (see front page) siting the new St Mary of the Angels school on the larger site which, now that the Great Western Road extension has been dropped, is now available.

No less than four councillors spoke about the WNA. We were complimented on our effective campaign against the road ex-

ension. Councillor Whatmore, who chaired the Baptist Hall meeting last January, warmly praised the responsible work of our organization. Councillor Dubs also praised the work of the WNA as a good example of how local people can bring pressure to bear upon the Council. He later remarked to your observers that we had achieved a rare accomplishment: stopping something that all Departments had agreed upon long before.

There is something exciting about the fact that our organization - brought into being only five months ago - should have so quickly gained respect and attention from such a powerful group.

London is very big. Our organization is still rather small. But we are being heard.



If you live or work in this area you should be a member of the Westbourne Neighbourhood Association

Tenants! Know Your Rights

1. Remember this - whether you are a tenant of a furnished or unfurnished flat or room - you cannot be evicted without a proper court order.

2. If anyone tries to threaten you in any way in order to get you out of your home, you must immediately inform the Town Clerk of Westminster City Council (phone 828 8070, or write to Westminster City Council, City Hall, Victoria Street, SW1). The law will be brought into action in order to stop any further harassment.

3. If you have received a notice to quit, even though it may be legally acceptable, you can still contest this order. If you wish to do so, contact your nearest Citizen's Advice Bureau (71 Kensington Gardens Square - just off Westbourne Grove - phone 727 0353). It is quite possible that, with proper legal advice, you will not have to evict your premises.

4. If your landlord tries to raise your rent, and you are a tenant of an unfurnished flat, you have the legal right - if you feel the increase is unreasonable - to ask for a fair rent to be negotiated. To do this you must contact your local Rents Officer (call Citizen's Advice Bureau at 727 0353 for details) in order

to negotiate with the landlord and the Rent Officer towards an acceptable rent to all three parties. You do not have to accept any rent increase without protest.

5. In the last four to five years many elderly tenants of our neighbourhood have been offered large sums of money in return for vacant possession of their rooms. Sometimes as much as a thousand pounds have been offered to ensure that a house can be sold with the sign 'Vacant possession' as its main enticement. Many old people have accepted this money - it is probably illegal to call it a 'bribe' - and moved out, only to discover, much too late, that in today's housing desert a thousand pounds is as useless as a ton of diamonds would have been to Robinson Crusoe.

DON'T GIVE UP YOUR HOME, NO MATTER HOW MUCH MONEY IS OFFERED TO YOU, UNTIL YOU HAVE TAKEN ADVICE FROM EXPERTS. (See our back page and the enclosed information sheet.)

6. If you use it properly, the law is on your side. All tenants have legal rights. Protect yourself and your family by using them.

We've Been Talking To...

...the Reverend Ken Bartlett, one of the most important members of Shelter, and director of the Paddington Churches Housing Association.

Their aim is to buy houses and renovate them in order to rent decent flats to families on limited income. It is a non-profit making association, and would welcome the support and encouragement of the WNA to influence Westminster City Council to give them financial aid in order to help those who might otherwise be homeless.

Consequently we have written to the Westminster City Council asking them to increase its support of housing associations in this area in the form of more generous grants and loans.

We have also been talking to two local groups. The WNA Secretary spoke to the Committee of the Kildare Terrace Residents Association and as a result they supported us in our campaign against the Great Western Road extension. Committee members have also attended two of the Pembridge Association meetings.

Funny Noises

Two summers ago we had a friend from New York staying with us. On the first morning after her arrival she came down for breakfast looking bleary-eyed and bewildered.

'Jet-lag', I thought, or perhaps the time had finally come to replace the battered mattress on our roll-away bed. But they weren't the reasons for her mild confusion. There was, she informed us, this weird noise early in the morning. Like really weird.

'Like how weird?' we asked anxiously.

'Well I know it sounds crazy...but like a lot of boids tweeting away at each other.'

When we assured her that's exactly what it had been she seemed even more bewildered. 'Boids? In the middle of a Big City? That's wild. You never hear boids in New York.'

She wasn't the first nor will she be the last visitor from New York to stress how lucky we are living where and how we do. In New York only the very very rich or the very very poor live near the centre of the city. The idea of ordinary people being able to live in houses with gardens (yes, I know the gardens are small but they're still gardens), of families bringing up young children within walking distance of busy shopping areas, cinemas, schools and libraries, the very idea of the central city being kept alive by and for people rather than skyscraper shrines to the Great God 'Office'...all those ideas, which we take so much for granted

each day of our lives, are simply a very dead part of a very dead past in New York.

'It's so green and pleasant and quiet here', our visitors say.

'You'd have to move forty, fifty miles out of Manhattan to find anything like this. Only millionaires can afford to live like this in New York. Do you know how lucky you are?'

Not being millionaires (not even 'penny' millionaires) we certainly do know how lucky we are. We also know that we can't just count on continuing luck to keep our own particular part of this Big City the way we want it to be. Luck has a way of turning its back on people who rely on it completely. Something New Yorkers have already found out to their own sad cost.

Unless we want to follow their own bad example we must act now. Which means operating constructively to preserve all the good things in our neighbourhood: which means working together to ensure its future security: which means never believing that the silent powers of some mysterious Authority - 'Them' - must always, inevitably, overcome the combined strength of ordinary people - 'Us'.

Which, when you come right down to it, means joining and working for the Westbourne Neighbourhood Association.

Do it now.

HAS ANYONE NOTICED...what a few colourful window-boxes can do to improve a house - a street - a neighbourhood? HAS ANYONE HEARD...that our neighbours to the south have managed to save their cinema - the Gaumont at Notting Hill Gate? Maybe we can save our Odeon, Fight. HAS ANYONE WONDERED...why it is that Kensington/Chelsea Council

publish lists of all planning applications received and Westminster publishes only those they legally have to? Any answers Westminster? HAS ANYONE WORRIED...at the fact that the demolition of the area to the north of us seems to be going at a very lazy snail's pace? Why?

Useful Addresses

For trouble with your housing, law, family, job:

Paddington Neighbourhood Advice Bureau and Law Centre
465 Harrow Road, W10

For advice on harassment, implementation of the Housing Acts, etc.:

City Solicitor
Solicitor's Department
Westminster City Hall
Victoria Street, SW1

For advice on social services:

Westminster Social Services Department,
Area 4
71 Queensway, W2 (phone: 727 6464)

Old Peoples Welfare Association
313 Harrow Road, W2 (phone: 828 8070)

As well as the addresses listed above, you may find useful information in the back page of the information sheet enclosed. We would like to thank the Westminster Information Office for providing us with these free copies.

Councillors' Advice Bureaux:

First Friday in the month,
6.30-7.30 p.m. at:
Beauchamp Lodge
Warwick Crescent, W2

Third Friday in the month,
6.30-7.30 p.m. at:
St Stephen's Church Vestry
St Stephen's Crescent, W2

In addition,
all Paddington's Labour Councillors
take it in turns to be at:
39 Chippenham Road, W9
every Tuesday from 7.00-8.00 p.m.

Home addresses
of Councillors for Westbourne Ward:

Alfred Dubs, 56 Westbourne Park Villas, W2
Colin Brown, 12a Westbourne Terrace Road, W2
Serge Lourie, 1 Joanne House, Queensborough Mews, W2

Other Councillors living in our area:

John Whatmore, 6 Northumberland Place, W2
Max Taylor, 44 Northumberland Place, W2
Simon Ashton, 27 Newton Road, W2

WNA Membership

Please cut and give to the WNA Membership Secretary,
8a Moorhouse Road, W2.

I wish to become a member of the Westbourne
Neighbourhood Association.

My contribution is _____

Signed _____

Address _____

(Cheques to be made out to
'Westbourne Neighbourhood Association')

We already have well over 300 members, but we would like many more. It is numbers that will make our Association effective and it is in the interests of everyone to join.

The main role of the Association is to know about all developments in the Westbourne district and to communicate and to consult with the people living and working here.

If you are already a member, please persuade others to join. We ask for no more than 1p fee, but larger contributions are welcome.

Send your news and views on matters of local interest to:
The Secretary
Westbourne Neighbourhood Association
5 Moorhouse Road, W2

Printed and published by the Westbourne Neighbourhood Association
Designed by Gerald Cinamon