

Your Westbourne Neighbourhood Association Newsletter 8

Coffee Evening

There was a good turnout to the Neighbourhood Association meeting on 13th May, to discuss the use of the open space on the St. Stephens Gardens site, to have coffee, and to chat to neighbours.

The evening was opened by our chairman, Robert Beattie, who gave a short history of the Association and of the open space question. He then introduced Wendy Titman, of Westminster Play Association, who gave us an encouraging account of the functions and actions of her Association, and of what she thought were the play needs of children in the area; not sterile and fixed structures, but something on the lines of the adventure playground at present on the north east of the St. Stephens Gardens building site.

A discussion then took place which resulted in the following proposal:

That the land to be used for the new school playground be made up for this use as soon as possible, that the "adventure playground" at present on the north east corner of the site be moved to the south east of the site, that the north east corner be grassed over and that St. Stephens Gardens be widened and extended across Shrewsbury Road.

The purpose of the motion was that the school playground (which would be open out of school hours) would form an area for kicking balls, the adventure playground with a hut would cater for under fives and over fives at different periods of the day, and a revamped St. Stephens Gardens could provide a beautiful area of flowers and grass.

The motion was agreed unanimously.

Coffee was served and our chairman then raised the question of the poor communications between members, and between members and the committee. Street representatives would be one solution.

Street Representatives

The functions of street representatives would be:

To channel to the Committee matters raised by members which are relevant to the activities of the Association.

To enrol new members

To collect subscriptions

Ideally there should be two street representatives in each street.

Your present street representatives are:

Winifred Blay, 39 Courtnell Street, W2

Jean Field, 55 Artesian Road, W2 (representing from Needham Rd to Ledbury Rd)

Sheelagh Lewis, 81A Talbot Road, W2

Eileen Coyne, 39 Sutherland Place, W2

Rosemary Close-Brook, 23 Sutherland Place, W2

Mary Eveleigh, 4 Moorhouse Rd, W2

If you would like to be a street representative in your street, please contact Penelope Whiting 21 Sutherland Place. We still need at least one for every 'street' except Sutherland Place.

Choice for the Neighbourhood

If you've lived in the area for a while there are probably changes you would like to see made. If any of them are planning matters, now is the time to air your views to Westminster City Council. Town planning is about such important topics as how land should be used, what new buildings should be permitted and what changes should be made in the structure or use of existing buildings.

Westminster City Council is currently consulting the people in the preparation of a Development Plan for Westminster - which when finished will contain the major planning policies for the area for the next 10 or 15 years. Last year stage 1 of this consultation process took place, with working parties (one for each area of Westminster) being set up to discuss and put forward planning policies for Westminster. WNA was represented on the Bayswater West working party. Over last summer WCC and it's officers sifted the policies put forward by the working parties and produced a report 'Choices', containing what they see are the feasible planning choices for Westminster. With this report is a supplement containing the feasible policies for Bayswater West.

Now in stage 2 of the consultation WCC is inviting comment from all members of the public on the choices presented in the report. The report can be obtained from WCC. A series of meetings has been held between May and early June to allow public discussion and comment upon the choices, the purpose being to give WCC an idea of the policies people want.

The report implies that the choices are somewhat limited, the area is largely built up and is covered by conservation area policies. It is likely that many of the changes will not involve redevelopment.

However there are still changes to be made e.g:

HOUSING.

- 1) Should the Council continue to protect family accommodation, or should it encourage provision of homes for the increasing numbers of one and two person households. The majority at the public meeting thought that family accommodation should continue to be protected.
- 2) Should grants be given for house improvements at lower standards. This would encourage more people to take up grants and thus protect low rental accommodation, as well as making grant money go further. The majority at the meeting thought that lower standards should only be considered as a temporary expedient in this period of financial restraint.
- 3) If a developer wishes to redevelop an area which contains some fair-rented accommodation, should the Council insist that the fair-rented accommodation be protected. Yes, thought the majority at the meeting.

SOCIAL AND COMMUNITY FACILITIES

The main choice here was the extent to which these facilities should be concentrated or dispersed. The majority thought that these should be dispersed, with the particular facility meeting the requirements of the larger proportion in any particular locality (i.e. where there is a high proportion of young families, a clinic should be set up; if a large proportion were elderly, facilities for the elderly should be located there).

RECREATION AND OPEN SPACE

WCC identifies Bayswater West as being deficient in open space. The main choices were the extent to which more outdoor open space should be provided, the extent to which indoor facilities should be provided as a substitute for outdoor facilities, and whether West End type entertainment facilities should be allowed to expand into the area. There was much discussion on the first two choices, around whether there was a deficiency or whether what was there was badly advertised. On balance the meeting decided that better advertising could rectify much of the deficiency. On the third choice the meeting was unanimous - NO.

There is a WNA working party chaired by Gerald Cinamon which is considering leisure uses for the open space on St. Stephens Garden site (see 'coffee evening' page 1). If you have any ideas on this please contact one of the following:

Gerald Cinamon, 35 Courtnell Street, W2.
Felicity Ashbee, 21 Courtnell Street, W2.
Frederick Stafford, 81A Talbot Road, W2.
Penelope Whiting, 21 Sutherland Place, W2.
Leslie Struthers, 39 Courtnell Street, W2.

TRANSPORT

The main choice was between having large environmental areas, with a few busy through roads, or having smaller areas with a finer road network for through traffic (with this second choice Talbot Road and Chepstow Road would carry heavier flows than they do at present but it would be easier to get about the area by car). The majority of those present were not convinced of the need for a decision on the choices, preferring a piecemeal approach to any traffic problems in the area.

SHOPPING

The main choice was the extent to which shops should be protected against changes of use (mainly to offices). WCC is committed to protecting shops on Queensway; this choice referred to shops in the rest of the area. The general feeling of the meeting was that local shops should be protected, but some people thought that the Council did not help with the rates it charged!

These are the meetings which have been attended by representatives from WNA up to the time of writing. Further meetings cover employment, tourism, townscape.

The preferences stated at the meetings, together with those which members of the public might state on writing in, will be go before the Council in the summer, and a draft plan will be produced towards the end of the year. This will be the third stage in the production of the Development Plan and the public will again have an opportunity to comment, and a public inquiry will be held. So if you haven't been involved in the working parties you can still comment upon the Plan. In fact, up to mid-July you can write in to the Council with your

comments on the 'Choices' report. Look out for announcements in the press, and future WNA newsletters will keep you informed.

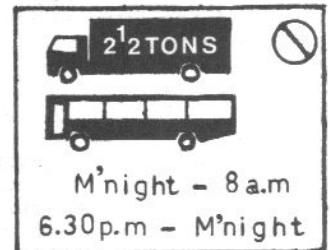
The following reports are available

Report on Stage Two: Choices.
Working Parties and Panels: Your Views.
Problems, Issues and Priorities

and you can obtain them from:

City of Westminster,
Department of Architecture and Planning,
City Hall, SW1.

Lorries Out



You may have seen the yellow notices appearing on lampposts in some streets in our area. These have been placed in preparation for an order prohibiting the parking of lorries and coaches, between the hours stated, on any of the streets in the City of Westminster. The Order will apply about the middle of June; it should have come into force on 1st May but the G.L.C. requires that adequate off-street parking be available and there have been some delays in clearing one of the parking sites. The important thing to remember is that even if your street, or section of street, does not have a notice, from mid-June lorries over 2½ tons and coaches are prohibited from parking in the evening or overnight and if you see one you should inform the police. The fine for any and every offence is £6, and unlike car parking offences, no waiting time is allowed. Experience in other London boroughs, some of which have had such bans for one or two years (Westminster would seem to have dragged its heels a bit here) has shown that the bans are very effective. They are fair to everyone, no streets have been selected for special treatment, and the lorry parks are chosen to minimise adverse environmental effects.

All Change

You may have noticed the increasing number of cyclists around town. Well then you should know about ALL CHANGE TO BIKES WESTMINSTER which was launched a year ago to fight for a fair deal for the cyclist in Central London. The organisation, based locally in Talbot Road, believes that traffic planners have ignored the needs of the cyclist for far too long.

Indeed last year Westminster City Council resolved to do nothing for the cyclist because cycling is dangerous. ACBW believes the opposite; that something must be done to make it safer for cyclists. Their leader, Frederick Stafford, says adamantly "Plan for the cyclist and you will do four things: reduce accidents; reduce traffic congestion, noise and pollution;

Westbourne Birds

John Eason

My wife and I have lived in the neighbourhood, near Chepstow Road, for more than 10 years. In this time we have noticed a gradual but distinct increase in the number of bird species in and near our street, and visiting our small garden. For the last few years it is possible from memory to claim to have heard or seen annually one or two varieties of birds previously not seen by us before.

Ten years ago I don't believe we saw from our house anything more than house sparrows and London pigeons. About 6 years ago we hung up a peanut-feeder to attract tits, not really expecting them to come, especially as the only suitable place for them was a few inches from our bedroom window. For several weeks they didn't come. But as soon as there was a spell of wintry weather several tittering blue tits did come. Now blue and great tits come every autumn and well into the following spring - or until, (on expert advice) we stop putting out peanuts when the plague of summer insects starts!

In attracting blue tits we also, of course, attract loads of house sparrows (whose skill at hanging onto a feeder has so much improved that it almost matches that of suburban greenfinches). No greenfinches come to our window yet, though in the last few years we have heard them calling as they fly over our street.

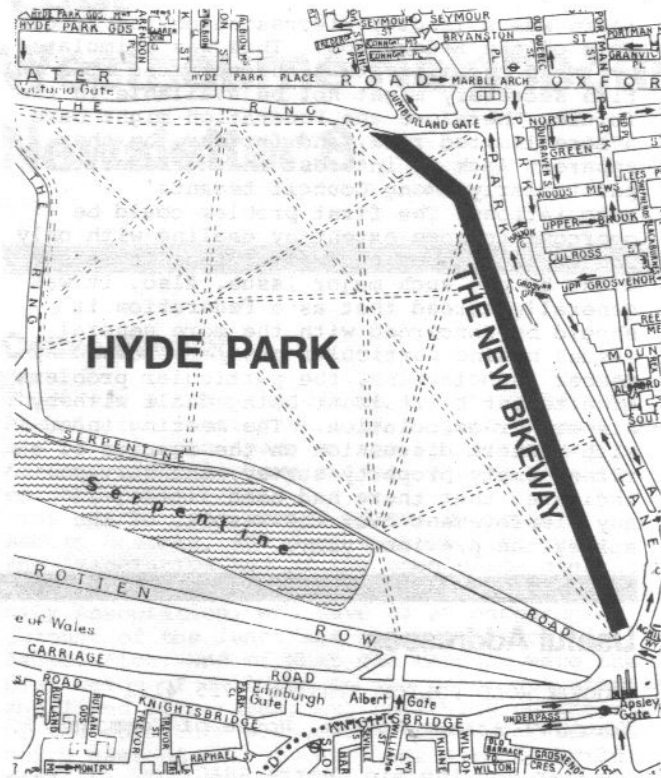
Like many residential streets in towns, ours has a largish population of cats. These cats must account for a good few deaths, and if we know of any nests with young in them we have as anxious a time as the parents! The only species of bird that we have seen nesting near us are pigeons and a blackbird, probably the same cock, with possibly a different mate, each year, as we have heard the same blackbird song for the last 6 or 7 seasons (he is never a loud exuberant songster like many members of his species). The only other song birds we have heard are song thrushes, but these rarely and not actually in our street.

A bird which rather surprised me by his appearance is the goldfinch. We have seen and heard them fairly often, even flying over our street. Early one morning last summer I saw a couple of them quarrelling on the wing down the centre of Westbourne Grove!

Jays appeared last summer, also quite near to us. I saw one of these flying across Westbourne Grove, only just above house-height, and another, lower still, over Chepstow Place. We heard their harsh screams, too, several times, coming from the middle of our street. Kestrels sometimes fly over, not microscopically high up, and I have also heard skylarks, redwings (at night in autumn) and even, if I remember correctly, a linnnet, each making their respective noises as they passed overhead.

There is a block of high old flats opposite to our house on the chimneys of which starlings sit and 'sing' to us - especially in the autumn. Crows also favour this high point, and often are the first birds one hears on summer mornings at daybreak.

On fine summer days, for the last two or three years, the sky above us has contained half a dozen high flying but audibly shrieking swifts. Last year I often saw them skimming the surface of the round pond in Kensington Gardens, together with house martins. The most recent birds to visit us are wrens and pied wagtails. The wrens we hear occasionally (not singing, but



save fuel; and lastly, create a more pleasant environment."

The bikes campaign is looking for two main things:

CYCLE ROUTES - a network of quiet backstreets where the cyclist has priority (including ways through the Parks) and

PARKING FACILITIES - at stations, public buildings, shops etc., these should be covered and supervised where possible.

Since the launching Press Conference a lot has happened. ACBW now has well over 200 members, fifty of whom turned out for a demo on the steps of Westminster Council House. Representatives have met G.L.C. Transport Chief Jim Daly. There have been continuing discussions with Westminster Councillor Tom Whipham (Chairman of Highways Committee) and top Council engineers.

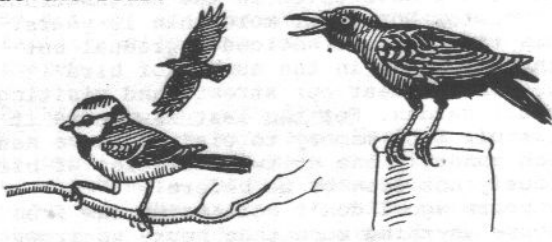
Considerable planning work was undertaken to put forward a trial bike route from Bayswater to Bloomsbury, which the Council have been examining. ACBW initiated a new "London Liaison Bike Group" bringing together all the bike groups in London. They organised a publicity exercise at Olympia and also have super new "ALL CHANGE TO BIKES" Tee shirts for sale (at £1.50 each from address below).

But the group's first big success was getting the new bike route in Hyde Park. This was achieved in the record breaking time of only six months from when ACBW asked Baroness Birk to try an experiment in the Royal Park. The bike group think it is in a bad place "taking cyclists from one accident blackspot to another" i.e. from Marble Arch to Hyde Park Corner. But they think it is a step in the right direction for cyclists in Westminster.

Spurred on by this success ACBW intends to keep on fighting for a fair deal for cyclists. They are now looking to Westminster Council to do something positive. If you want to help by joining the group just send £1.00 (with name and address) to

ALL CHANGE TO BIKES WESTMINSTER; 81A Talbot Rd., W.2.

making their clockwork call-note) in the gardens at the back of our house. The wagtail has been with us for months; usually we see him as he flies up uttering his double wagtail sound (which is what attracts our attention to him in the first place), apparently from the gardens at the rear.



PCHATA's AGM

"The annual general meeting of the PCHA Tenants Association was held on 29th March at the 510 Centre, Harrow Road. Paddington's MP Arthur Latham addressed the meeting saying that whilst it might be argued that housing association and council landlords had a greater sense of social responsibility and ethical understanding, the kinds of difficulty and conflict that arose seemed to be similar to those of other landlords. Three amendments to the constitution of the Tenants Association were approved by the meeting including the raising of the annual subscription by 5p and the introduction of associate membership for non-PCHA tenants. After the 'official business' was over tea and coffee were served whilst those present chatted to committee members, Arthur Latham and Westminster Councillor Anthea Masey. This part of the agenda was very well received. Copies of the Tenants Association's annual report was available free from 510 Harrow Road, W9. This report concludes that the ultimate aim of the Tenants Association is to continue to campaign for reform at PCHA until the level of complaints by tenants is so low as to make a tenants association unnecessary".

Federation AGM

The Annual General Meeting of the Paddington Federation of Tenants and Residents Associations (of which W.N.A is a member) was held on 30th April at Beauchamp Lodge, Warwick Crescent. During the formal business

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

I wish to become a member/renew my subscription of the Westbourne Neighbourhood Association

My contribution is _____

Signed _____

Address _____

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

there was a lengthy discussion on the future role of the Federation. This was stimulated by the possibility that the services of a full time secretary might not be available in the future, therefore the Federation might have a more limited role, and further, by the apparent lack of interest in the Federation, particularly among Council tenants' associations. The first problem could be overcome to some extent by dealing with only one or two issues at a time; rent increases might be one such major issue. Also, it was generally agreed that as a Federation it should be concerned with the more general issues behind particular problems raised by member associations, the particular problems of a tenant or resident being dealt with by his or her association. The meeting ended with a short discussion on the results of a recent empty property survey; the survey indicated that there had been little, if any, improvement over the results of the survey the previous year.

Useful Addresses

HARROW ROAD POLICE STATION: 725 4191

Your MP: Arthur Latham, House of Commons

Shelter Housing Aid Centre SHAC

189a Old Brompton Road, SW5 (phone 373 7276)

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:

Social Services Department
Area 4

71 Queensway, W2 (phone 727 6464)

Old Peoples Welfare Association

313 Harrow Road, W2 (phone 828 8070 ext. 3074)

Councillors' Advice Bureaux:

First Friday in the month,
6.30-7 pm. at
Beauchamp Lodge
Warwick Crescent, W2

In addition,
all Paddington's Labour Councillors take
take it in turns to be at:

39 Chippenham Road, W9
every Tuesday from 7.00-8.00pm.

Home addresses

of Councillors for Westbourne Ward

Alfred Dubs, 56 Westbourne Park Villas, W2
Colin Brown, 12a Westbourne Terrace Road, W2
Anthea Masey, 136a Queensway, W2

GLC Councillor

Jean Merriton, 17 Cunningham Place, NW8

Other Councillors living in our area:

Richard May, 117 Westbourne Park Road, W2
John Whatmore, 6 Northumberland Place, W2
Simon Ashton, 27 Newton Road, W2
Reg Watts, 37 Talbot Road, W2

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