

rents...unfair rents...unfair rents...unfair rents

Tenants' candidates to fight Sefton



TENANTS in the Scotland Road area, traditionally a Labour Party stronghold, have nominated four candidates to stand in the election for the new district and metropolitan councils in April and May.

Aldermen Sefton and Morgan are the Labour candidates, as the reorganisation of local government means the abolition of aldermen. Both men voted for implementation of the 'Fair Rent' Act and are banking on an easy victory in a safe Labour seat.

Dissatisfaction with the Labour Party has been brewing in the Scotland Road area for some time as the environment deteriorates and councillors remain apathetic.

The rent act, which resulted in a rent strike in the area, seems to

have been the last straw.

The tenants' candidates are Joe Stroud, Tommy King, Bernie Doyle and Brian Butler. All four live in the area. None hold party cards. Their headquarters, where they will formulate a common policy, are in the old Free School office in Limekiln Lane.

The election of tenants to the council could bring small improvements in the short term and encourage the growth of tenants' associations.

They could also highlight the incompetence of the main parties.

But tenants' councillors in the past have found themselves in a frustrating position, caught between party politics, unable to engineer the changes people want.

How to appeal

COUNCIL TENANTS who aren't either on total rent strike or with-holding the increase should at least be aware of their rights of appeal under the rent act to challenge the decisions of rent assessment committees. The following list shows the sort of arguments you could use to try and get your rent reduced.

- 1 I am already paying a 'fair' rent/above a 'fair' rent
- 2 I have no security of tenure and do not have the same rights in rent-fixing procedures as private tenants
- 3 The Council fails to carry out repairs or maintenance, both exterior and interior, viz:
 - a the outside of the block is not painted and the window frames are rusting
 - b the windows do not open/jam/have broken sash cords
 - c the door of my flat jams/the lock does not work
 - d the kitchen is damp/suffers from condensation
 - e the central heating/refuse disposal systems do not work/make a noise
 - f the lift is always out of order/never stops at my floor
 - g the lift is dirty/hallways and stairs are never cleaned
- 4 The flats I live in have poor amenities, viz:
 - a the grass is covered in refuse/is out of bounds/shrubs are ripped up
 - b the access balconies are windy and rainswept/the block has no lifts
 - c the nearest play area is two miles away/the play equipment is always broken/locked up/the community hall has not been built yet
 - d the parking facilities cannot cope with the demand and I park on the street
- 5 The flat I live in is poorly designed, viz:
 - a there is not enough cupboard space/too few power points
 - b the windows on my fourth floor flat can't be cleaned from inside
 - c door locks in the block are too standardised (offering poor protection)
 - d the central heating system blows hot air above our heads
 - e I am on the 12th. floor and cannot let my children out to play
- 6 The immediate neighbourhood reduces the value of the flats, viz:
 - a we are on a noisy main road/there are too many accidents
 - b the gasworks/printing works/saw-dust factory makes too much noise/smells/brings too much traffic down past our windows/pours out smoke all day
 - c the shops nearby are inadequate/we have no chemist/greengrocer/butcher within one/three miles
 - d aircraft from the airport 12 miles away have a flight path over the estate
 - e the nearest park/large town/cinema/public house, etc., is 3/8 miles away
 - f public transport to work/entertainment/shops is poor
- 7 The police refuse to patrol within the estate as they regard it as private property and thus vandalism goes unchecked/I am afraid to go out at night

Community centre bans Speke tenants

SPEKE Tenants' Association have been banned from holding their meetings in the local community centre.

They are one of several tenants' groups in the city who have found it difficult to obtain halls or centres because of their militant attitude to the rent increases.

Speke Community Centre's management committee say they imposed the ban because the association's policy of partial rent strike was encouraging tenants to act illegally - and that they shouldn't advocate these policies in a corporation-owned building.

But this argument is ridiculous because the tenants are allowed - at great expense - to meet in other corporation buildings such as local schools.

A number of known Conservatives sit on the community centre management committee, which may help to explain their attitude.

Mr Harry Phillips, who is standing

as a Conservative candidate for Speke this year, was previously chairman of the tenants' association, at a time when it was almost defunct. (It has now been resurrected by more militant tenants).

Tenants in Netherley are also facing problems over their meeting place. They are not allowed the same 'cut-price' rates at the comprehensive school as the more 'respectable' and 'responsible' community council.

PLASTIC GRASS THREAT

A TRAFFIC roundabout in Liverpool's city centre may be covered with plastic imitation grass.

The roundabout - full name: The Hood Street/Roe Street Gyratory - will be crossed by a pedestrian bridge which, it is feared, would prevent rain and sunlight reaching real grass planted below.



Everton Brow... the present gipsy site

Gipsy site will be short of space

LESS THAN half the gipsies at present in Liverpool will get places on the city's official site now under construction at Waterloo Dock Goods Station.

The site will have space for 25 caravans, but the number of caravans on waste land off Shaw Street and Stanley Road is usually more than sixty, and occasionally reaches as high as ninety.

Rather optimistically, a Gipsy Council spokesman said he expected the gipsies would hold a ballot to decide who should have the places.

The site, which Liverpool Corporation has to provide under the 1968 Caravan Sites Act, will be ready in August - more than three years after the Act came into force. The Act says all local authorities must provide a site with toilets and running water for at least 15 caravans, unless they can prove there is no suitable land or they have no gipsies within their boundaries. Originally Liverpool applied for exemption, claiming they had no suitable land, but their application was rejected.

After the site has opened the corporation can apply for designation

as an area which has fulfilled its obligations under the Act. When designation is granted (as seems likely) all the gipsies who cannot get a place on the official site will have to leave Liverpool and try somewhere else - and will no doubt meet the same problem.

One of the reasons why Liverpool has so many gipsies is harassment in surrounding areas, particularly Bootle.

Those who do get a place on the site will find no work space has been provided and if they leave Liverpool for a short while they may lose their place.

Liverpool also has a lot of gipsies passing through on their way

to and from Ireland. There is a strong case for providing a transitory camp for them, but none is planned.

To their credit, the corporation are providing a slightly bigger site than the legal minimum. They are not as bad as Tees-side council, which is demanding rents of £8.50 per week for a place on their site presumably to deter gipsies from using it. But Liverpool compares badly with Dublin where the site has plenty of work space and separate toilets for each caravan.

● Kirkby and Formby are among the latest councils to try and avoid providing sites by claiming there is no suitable land.

'Stop dumping' campaign grows

THE CAMPAIGN to stop sludge dumping in Liverpool Bay has gathered momentum following the suspension of the plan to build a sewage pipeline from Manchester to Liverpool, and the complete rejection of plans for sludge tanks at the Dingle.

Liverpool Trades Council's pressure against dumping has been significant, especially that of its newly formed Environmental Health Committee. On February 7 the council held a pollution conference. An exhibition on pollution is planned in connection with the Trades Council's centenary celebrations in April. (Friends of the Earth will be helping).

On January 26 the local authorities sludge consortium decided not to apply for a Parliamentary Bill to enable a sludge pipeline to be built between Manchester and Liverpool, but there still remains the possibility of a smaller pipeline from Davyhulme (near Manchester) to Liverpool.

Although the City Council have not yet definitely rejected the pipeline plan, they have until December to decide on a definite solution to dumping, according to the Transportation and Basic Services deadline.

However, the reorganisation of local government in April 1974 may provide a convenient excuse for them to brush the problem under someone else's carpet.

Powerful companies with an eye on the possibly huge profits to be made from a successful sewage treatment scheme may beat the City Council to it, although only when their feasibility studies show a greater profit to be made from recycling than from the present dumping business.

Difficulties may also arise where,

in an enlarged Water Authority covering most of south Lancashire, Liverpool is going to have its work cut out persuading the other members that they should not dump their sewage in other people's bays, after storing it virtually in other people's backyards (as in the Dingle sewage plan).

This is what the Dingle residents' action group have tried to impress upon the city council. On January 29 the group held a public meeting where one of the speakers was Mr Sam Smith, the Southport ecologist.

RECYCLING FACTORY

Mr Smith has plans for a £100million recycling factory which would reprocess sewage sludge to provide animal foodstuffs and, as a subsidiary pure water. One of his more important proposals is the reclamation of metals - toxic or otherwise. At present industrial effluent (which contains the toxic metals) often gets mixed with ordinary sewage. Mr Smith wants to separate them. The present treatment of sewage to provide sludge does nothing to reduce the proportion of toxic metals, and since they do not decay, they are accumulating to dangerous levels in Liverpool Bay.

This is what Friends of the Earth stressed in their recent reply to 'Out of Sight, Out of Mind' (the Working Party report on sludge dumping).

● FOOTNOTE: Liverpool is considering burning sewage, and Bebington, which has just adopted a £328,000 incineration scheme, will be closely watched not only by Liverpool council, but by Sam Smith, who is planning to disprove the efficiency of incineration.

— MIKE PETRY

Houses—buy now while stocks last!

UNDETERRED by the prospect of elections in April, Bootle's Labour council have been pressing on with their unsocialist housing policies:

● Developers are queuing up for the contract to build 350 houses in the town's Sefton district, which the council then plan to sell. The price of each house will be £2,000 to £3,000 below market value (the value of the land has more than doubled since the council bought it). And buyers will be able to sell at a massive profit after five years. No other authority - Labour or Conservative - has attempted such a scheme on this scale.

'This scheme is rather unique and will raise some eyebrows,' remarked housing chairman Bernard Hillen.

● The sale of a further 46 council houses was approved at the council meeting on January 24. Labour have now sold 159 homes since last March. Altogether, since November 1968 the council have sold 334 houses - 5.18% of the total housing stock. The money from these sales will help to finance the Sefton 'private houses' scheme.

● During the first nine months of 1972, the council built 180 houses and demolished 184.

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