

Playtime at Free School

By Vincent Johnson and John Garrett

Scotland Road Community Trust have been very busy since their most famous scheme, the Free School, completed its first term. The trust, set up as a fund-raising body for the school, also run a community transport service, adventure playgrounds, and cheap holidays for families in need.

The community transport buses are used for local kiddies' and old folks' outings, but are also available for hire to groups and individuals at cost price. They will, for example, be taking people to the four holiday centres in the Lake District and Wales.

In the words of one of the organisers: "There are opportunities here for walking, swimming, fishing, visits to the beach and local places of interest."

The scheme has proved so popular that a committee of local residents has been set up to cope with the deluge of applications.

The first adventure playground run by the trust started on the site of a burnt-out warehouse off Vauxhall Road. News of the playground spread fast. Kids rolled in empty oil-drums, and local residents supplied wood.

In fact the response of local people to the school and to the other schemes has been overwhelming. More than £1,000 worth of equipment has been donated to the school, although they are still short of cash.

The Free School has successfully completed its pilot scheme. It started with five children and ended with sixteen. The children, who decide their own timetable and rules, settled for a school day from 9-15 a.m. to 4-15p.m.



The one that didn't get away

Arthur Dooley, the Liverpool sculptor, is to be prosecuted for not filling in his census form.

The census authorities wrote to Arthur early in August giving him one last chance to fill in the form.

If he hadn't filled it in by August 9...the letter warned... he would be summoned in the Magistrates' Court.

Arthur— who tangled with the pompous Registrar-General when he visited Liverpool— commented with a shrug of his shoulders and a grin: "I'm still not filling it in." Refusal to fill in the census form is punishable with a £50 fine.

But the Registrar-General is being selective about who he prosecutes.

So far he hasn't threatened the Tuebrook woman who filled her census form in using the I-Spy code, and gave her name in code as Donal Duck.

After they deciphered the name an official came back and protested she hadn't given her correct name. Eventually he left in despair.

A spokesman for Somerset House told the Free Press: "No, we can't say how many people filled in their census forms. No, we can't say how many people will be prosecuted. No, we can't say how many letters threatening prosecution we have already sent out to people."

Motorway: a comedy of errors...

Two Liverpool Corporation Departments are assisting the leader of the city council in preventing public participation in the decision on the M 62 route.

The City Estates Department have admitted they could make an error of 25% in their valuations of property, but they have refused to give any information that would allow the Picton Residents Association to check valuations.

An error of 25% could easily swing the decision from one route to another.

And Liverpool's Director of Transport, Mr Ronald Williams has put his own boot in on the M 62 "public participation" exercise.

In a personal letter to MacDonald MacDonald Steward, Williams has denounced the form public participation has taken on the M 62.

He says: "I do not think it is possible for any progress to be made if relatively small groups of people such as the Picton Residents Association ... are allowed to influence the city council in its overall duty of planning highways for the whole of the city."

His contempt knew no bounds.

"I would prefer to have the exercise regarded as one for 'public information.'

"The failings of this public participation exercise have led to the series of difficult and awkward questions which have been raised by the Picton Residents Association.

Mr J.A. Ryden, deputy city estates surveyor, has refused to say how his department values property or release the total valuations for each route when they are ready.

Nor will the city estates surveyor agree to sample the past performances of his valuers to give an idea of how accurate they have been.

People's worst fears arise out of the issues of valuations and compensation. The route of the M 62 could be swayed by the errors of the city estates department.

But the city estates surveyor stubbornly refuses to give information to the people who pay his wages — because he fears the deficiencies of his department's age-old methods will be exposed.

Even with the information

the Picton Residents have dragged out of the Corporation they now know far more about the M 62 routes than the councillors who will be making the decision.

But if anyone is monitoring this laughably-called 'public participation' exercise for the Urban Motorways Commission they could well begin writing the epitaph now.



"Why don't you cut down on his TV?"

A right stick-up!

What has Liverpool Corporation Works Department got to do with a shooting-stick and a holiday cruise?

That's the question that's been doing the rounds of the Works Department depots recently.

The man with the answer is believed to be not a million miles away from the housing committee chairman, a Mr. Gordon Pascoe.

Just before an important meeting not so long ago he told a host of Works managers and James Hall, Director of Housing, about the problem of his shooting stick.

Whenever he went on holiday

cruises, Pascoe told the meeting, he liked to sit on the deck propped up on his shooting stick. The problem, however, was that the sharp end left a hole in the deck.

As he was soon due away on another cruise he asked the Works Managers if one of their men could fix some kind of rubber block on the end of his shooting stick to stop this happening.

We haven't heard yet whether the Works Department has got the job, or whether tenders are being invited for this important contract.

Out-of-town Tinne

Mr Michael Tinne is a councillor for Tuebrook. More than a few Tuebrook residents are a bit upset that he lives miles away from the area.

The city council year book for 1970-71 gives a Frodsham address for Mr Tinne.

Some statistics that might confirm their belief that a councillor living so far away can't represent Tuebrook are provided by his attendance record on the Neighbourhood Organisations Committee last year.

Councillor Tinne was appointed the city council's representative on the NOC in July 1970.

Out of 11 meetings he was absent from eight. He bothered to send apologies on only three occasions.

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