

# Free School battles on

Losing their school buildings at the Everton Red Triangle Club has not deterred the Scotland Road Free School. Other premises, as yet unannounced, have been secured.

Until last week, they were faced with a council and education authority who refused to make any contribution to the children's welfare, even to help with the cost of school meals.

A motion was put before the council's schools sub-committee on October 19 by Labour councillor Stan Thorne, supporting a request from the school for books, furniture and accommodation. He pointed out that with 250,000 school children truanting from school each day, something was desperately wrong with the present system of education, and experiments like the Free School must be given a chance.

Following the Director of Education's recommendation that no assistance be given to the school, on the grounds that there are "enough maintained schools in the

By  
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area," Stan Thorne's motion was defeated by eight votes to four.

At the full education committee meeting on November 2, however, following a surprise intervention by the Chairman of the Liberal Party, Lord Beaumont, the committee reversed the earlier decision. The meeting agreed to give the school equipment and allow free use of playing fields and swimming baths. They have made no decision on contributing to school meals or providing accommodation as yet.

One of the children, now at the school had refused to attend the nearby Archbishop Whiteside school. The education department had told his parents that if he didn't go to school, he would be sent away to an approved school. Hints were dropped that they should try the Free School, which they did. The Free School took him in because of these circumstances, thus saving the department the trouble



and expense of committing him to approved school.

But they gave the Free School no grant and deny making any suggestions advising the parents to try sending the boy to the school.

People have been coming forward not to suggest what others should do, but to go and organise services themselves.

It started with three ideas, the Free School, community transport and the holiday scheme that took 400 needy people to Wales and the Lake District last year.

Since then, an adventure playground has been set up, plans are under way to run a discotheque in a converted warehouse. Parcels are to be distributed to old folks at Christmas. They want to set up a non-profit making supermarket, a free soup service and an old age pensioners' social centre.

Their philosophy is very simple. You don't need much money, You don't need the council to organise these things for you. All you need is the spirit to serve a community and the enjoyment of organising it

# Urban aid pinch

Liverpool corporation have been caught on the hop by the Home Office's surprise approval of all urban aid applications from Liverpool.

The Home Office rubberstamped 13 applications from the city including ten from voluntary organisations - totalling more than £300,000.

But the reaction of the corporation is one of dismay. For they have to contribute 25% to urban aid grants, and will also have to foot the bill for running expenses on the community centres and other buildings which have been approved.

And serious consideration is being given to whether or not they can afford the bill.

To turn down some of the applications after Home Office approval would cause uproar among the voluntary organisations, who have in the past been given only pittance by urban aid.

But Liverpool Corporation could get round the extra cost by re-shuffling other social expenditure, a tactic difficult to detect in the programme estimates

# Whiter than white

Liverpool police chief James Haughton is wearing a broad smile these days. After all the allegations about his force, he is beginning to whiten them successfully.

First he declared that there was no reason to proceed with investigations into the statements made by a member of the force that drug planting and beatings up were taking place.

More recently a long disciplinary inquiry into the behaviour of a P.C. Poole outside the Why Not pub in Harrington Street, when members of the National Council for Civil Liberties were leaving a meeting held in the pub, concluded that P.C. Poole was in the clear.

Next hurdle is the allegation by former police basketball coach Jimmy Rogers that he was planted with cannabis. Jimmy is now assistant community relations officer for Liverpool, so the chief will have to step carefully before discrediting such an important member of the community.

Finally there is the long running Cruickshank complaint, inquiries into which began in May. There is still no end in sight.

Cruickshank has maintained all along that the police constable who planted him with cannabis in Cheap-side police station was a man by the name of Pierce.

In late September, in Liverpool magistrates court a police constable by the name of Pierce was fined £25 for attempting to bribe a fellow officer.

Rumour has it that the two Pierces bear a marked similarity to one another. And that the Pierce who was fined has also been booted out of the force.

Students of the local police are awaiting the next episode with undisguised curiosity.

# Tenants angry at TV monopoly

If tenants from several housing estates on Merseyside wish to hire a television from any firm except Rediffusion, they face a series of problems.

Firstly, nearly all the other TV rental firms will refuse to supply a set.

Secondly, if the tenant does find a firm willing to hire him a television, the set will have to be modified and connected to an appliance known as an inverter.

Thirdly, the set will cost more. This is because Rediffusion, with the willing connivance of several local authorities, have managed to grab a near monopoly over certain areas with their system of piped TV.

This situation, which may be profitable for Rediffusion, but may work against the interests of the tenants, has been brought to light by members of the Sefton and Netherton Tenants Association.

## Supply

In Sefton, Bootle, 80% of TV rental firms refuse to supply sets to tenants - because of cost and the time needed to modify them to use Rediffusion piped TV.

Also, the rental firms know that the inverter frequently causes faults - and this leads to long, protracted arguments with Rediffusion - who installed the system - over

who is to blame.

Some tenants not satisfied with the Rediffusion service may decide to pay £8.80 plus insurance for an outside aerial, and order a normal television.

But these tenants in Bootle run a grave risk of being evicted.

For under Clause 13 of the Tenancy Agreement, no Sefton tenant can have an outside aerial, as it is an aerial-free zone.

Clearly Rediffusion, by gaining the contract to install the piped TV system, have wired the area so they benefit most, and tenants are virtually forced to accept their rented televisions.

The Sefton and Netherton Tenants Association admit that on the

whole Rediffusion's televisions are cheaper, and the picture is of a good quality.

But there have been many complaints over the repair service. And recently there was the scandal when Rediffusion were using a detective agency to check up on the credit-worthiness of their customers.

Bootle Corporation seem to have gone along with Rediffusion out of sheer ignorance.

Mr Joseph Smith, the director of a TV rental firm in Stanley Road, Bootle, has signed a statement which says:

"We have never been able to find anyone in the Borough Engineer's electrical department who understands aerial systems at all."

# Warning on Realmdeal

A warning about Realmdeal - one of Merseyside's largest slum landlords - has been issued by the Liverpool University students' union solicitor.

Realmdeal are getting rid of all the old tenants in their Princes Road properties, so they can use a loophole in the Rent Act to sidetrack the Rent Tribunal.

By renting the properties to students, who won't stay long, Realmdeal hope to make £30,000

a year from 60 flats in Princes Road.

The students' union solicitor has warned that he doubts whether "any person in his, or her, right mind would seriously consider the Realmdeal proposals."



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