



Regency Square Area Society

NEWSLETTER 130 November 1997

The Brick Wall Bends

Most of the time working for the Society is like banging your head against a brick wall. The same old issues come up again and again. Complaints to the Council are met with polite replies that seem to bear no relation to what is happening on the streets.

So it is nice to report that over the past few weeks we do seem to have been making some progress. Here are some examples

Rubbish

At last the Council has recognised that this part of town is not like the suburbs. One rubbish collection a week is simply not enough.

So we now have one every day. It hasn't solved the problem completely of course because some people still wait for the collection and then put their rubbish out immediately afterwards so that it sits in the street for 24 hours. We queried in the last newsletter whether Clarence Square is included in the daily collections. The Council has now confirmed that it is.

A New Postman

Following numerous complaints about wrongly delivered letters, the Post office has finally taken some action. We now have a new post man. His round, also includes Churchill Square and must be one of the most difficult in the town.

Power Corrupts

And absolute power corrupts absolutely - as someone once said. Well the election result didn't quite give absolute power to the Labour Party but their recent visit to Brighton did make the town centre feel rather like a police state.

Residents were all questioned by police in their homes.

Roads were blocked - Queensbury Mews had a temporary building right across it and local residents had security lights and cameras right outside their windows.

Traffic rules were changed - Russell Square went from one way anti-clockwise to clockwise.

Parking was totally banned - builders had to carry materials long distances because they couldn't park outside the properties they were working on.

As a result of the many complaints a meeting was organised between the Council, the police and local representatives. Our chairman Brian Smith was there.

The police admitted that they had not foreseen the major problems that would arise as a result of the Labour Party using the Metropole as their HQ. Lessons have been learned.

If Labour comes back to the town in 1999, as they probably will, there will be greater public consultation and genuine consideration of the concerns raised as a result of this year's conference.

The council and police agreed that some aspects of the conference had not been handled in the best way, including advising residents what was going on, policing arrangements and the intrusiveness on residents and traders.

Many traders from the Lanes, Western Road, Preston Street and the seafront have reported that the week of the conference was the worst they have experienced. Somewhat surprisingly some hoteliers have also expressed disappointment about occupancy rates.

Parking on Sunday

Whatever your religion, if you've got a car you still need to park it on a Sunday. So the fact that the residents scheme only applies Monday to Saturday has always seemed unfair.

We have asked the Council to reconsider this on several occasions but without success.

Now at last it seems there might be hope of a change - though not for quite to right reason. The Council wants to increase income by extending voucher parking to Sundays. But they can only do so if they extend the residents' scheme as well.

SOCIETY CONTACTS

CHAIRMAN Brian Smith ☎ 325175
SECRETARY Pat McCulloch ☎ 773275
TREASURER & NEWSLETTER Roger Hinton
☎ 321794 email hinton@clara.net

The Draw Draws Near

Ticket sales are going well for the prize draw. Well over £1,000 has already been added to the Regency Square Improvement Fund.

There's still a month to go before the draw so there's plenty of time to sell more tickets. If you know anyone who hasn't bought any yet, polish up your persuasive powers and get to work.

For extra tickets call Traude Tappin on 735167 or Roger Hinton on 321794.

Prize Draw
7:30 pm
Thursday 11 December
Beach Hotel
Regency Square

Did your get pinched ?

In the run up to and during the Labour conference some parking tickets were issued somewhat over-enthusiastically to residents' vehicles. If you have a genuine grievance about the issue of a parking ticket during that period you should contact the police who will look into the circumstances in a sympathetic manner.

BUPA in Castle Street

Residents in Russell Square and Russell Mews have complained about the disturbance cause by deliveries to the BUPA building (Russell House).

BUPA is hoping to solve the problem by using Castle Street for deliveries in future. They are installing security / access equipment at their Castle Street entrance which they hope will be ready by the end of November.

Will this solve the problem, or just move it somewhere else ? Castle Street is largely residential so it will still be important to ensure that deliveries only take place at reasonable hours.

Dangerous Dumping

On the morning of 4th November our chairman noticed two sheets of broken picture frame glass dumped by the telephone junction box on the northern pavement in Regency Square at the top of Queensbury Mews.

He telephoned the council who said they would send a rapid response team to remove the glass. To their credit the glass was removed within a matter of minutes.

This junction box acts like a magnet for rubbish dumpers but surely someone dumping something as dangerous as broken glass in the streets calls for firmer action from the council to try to stop dumping in the first place rather than just collect up the rubbish.

There's Rubbish and Rubbish

We asked the Council why some rubbish gets left behind by the bin men. The answer was that they only collect "household" rubbish. So we asked for more clarification. Here is the reply from Mr K Smith who is the Senior Inspector:

"1 Household waste that will be collected by the normal service:

Generally speaking, materials which will fit in a dustbin. Food wrappers / containers / packaging, food waste, tin cans, plastic and glass jars and bottles (ideally these should be re-cycled), tea bags and associated items. Grass cuttings and other garden waste will also be collected so long as it is in the dust bin or securely tied in a plastic bag but this is an example of the sort of area where discretion is used. If someone abuses the system and puts out large quantities of garden waste on a regular basis we may make a charge for a special collection.

2 Bulky and non household waste which will only be removed by special arrangement

Carpets, wood, builders rubbish, paint tins, hot ash, large quantities of garden rubbish and DIY materials.

I am sure that the odd paint tin is included with included with household waste secured within a black plastic sack but major items such as beds and washing machines that have been illegally discarded are picked up by a special response unit. Should the offenders be identified of course, court proceedings can be taken."

Mr Smith can be contacted on 292062 for further details.

It doesn't go away

The West Pier that is. The Trust which owns it does seem to be making progress towards their target of securing a £14 million grant from the lottery fund to restore the pier's structure.

There are three things they needed to do before the grant can be confirmed.

One was to carry out a survey to confirm the costs of restoration. This was completed last July.

The second was to prepare an architectural concept design for a new one storey building which is to be constructed on the lower esplanade, under and adjacent to the pier. This building is an essential part of the scheme, since without it the restored pier would not generate enough funds to be economically viable.

The design has been produced and put on view at the Trust offices at the end of September. (Did any members see it ?) According to Trust Chief Executive, Geoff Lockwood, public comment on the scheme was "overwhelmingly favourable". At this stage it is only a concept since the final plans will have to be subject to the normal planning approval process.

The third requirement was to find a commercial partner to develop and operate the pier commercially. A partner has now been found, a joint venture between two companies.

One is London and Regional Properties, a large developer whose current schemes include the development of the historic Crystal Palace, Inland Revenue Offices in Manchester, and Cumbernauld town centre.

The other is Gruppo Ltd which has a global reputation for restaurants such as the Atlantic Bar and Grill (Glasshouse Street) and Coast Restaurant (Albermarle Street), both in London.

Possible uses for the pier which are currently being discussed include shops, restaurants, health and leisure facilities, hotel rooms, traditional seaside amusements, art and music venues and a museum of English piers. But there are no final plans yet and, again, they will be subject to planning permission.

The Trust is hoping that a final decision will be made on lottery funding by the end of the year. If it is, then work will start in Spring next year and be completed during the year 2000.