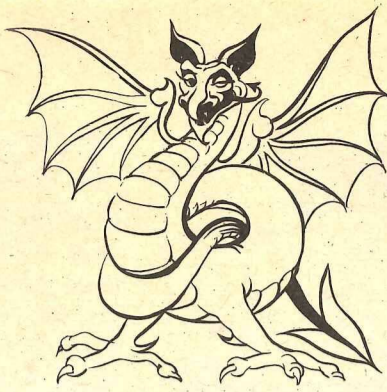


# BROCKLEY



# SOCIETY

The News Sheet

DELIVERED FREE TO OVER 3,000 HOUSEHOLDS IN THE BROCKLEY CONSERVATION AREA

July 1976

## Green light for

by Diane Balfour, John Moreland.

## St. Peter's Centre

For the past couple of years there have been numerous rumours and counter rumours about the future of St. Peter's Church Hall - "is it to be demolished? ... redeveloped for housing ...

... old peoples' flats etc. etc. ..." At last it looks as though the future of the Hall is to be settled. In the last couple of months a number of people living in Brockley have been trying to work out a feasible scheme whereby St. Peter's Hall could be run as a community centre for the use of everyone in Brockley. The following is a summary of what has happened to date and what is hoped for in the future.

### THE BUILDING AT PRESENT

St. Peter's Church Hall is the largest building in the area suitable for general group activities: it has a spacious main hall as well as numerous smaller rooms, kitchens, toilets etc., plus a garden area and tennis court outside.

At present it is under-used and a financial liability to St. Peter's Church Council (PCC). Lack of money has led to the building being neglected and consequently very little can be charged for its hire. Several organisations use the building - Brockley Playgroup, Judo Club, Brownies & Girl Guides and several church groups. Obviously these groups cannot be expected to pay the full cost of maintaining and running the building. There is a demand for the premises for weddings, dances and similar functions but the hall is not in a suitable state to attract more than nominal fees.

### THE "INITIAL SCHEME"

Towards the end of last year the Brockley Society approached St. Peter's PCC over the future of the building. As a result of this, together with the Brockley Neighbourhood Council, and other organisations in the area proposals for its use, management and financing were drawn up.

The scheme, in outline, was that Lewisham Borough Council should become the tenant of the hall for a minimum period of seven years and pay an annual rent to St. Peter's PCC. The responsibility for co-ordinating development of the hall as a community centre would be Brockley Neighbourhood Council's since this organisation is made up not only of elected members but of representatives from affiliated groups in the area such as those now using the hall. The actual running of the centre, it was proposed, would be done by a House Committee consisting of reps. from each of the regular users, as well as one of the Drake Ward Councillors and a representative from St. Peter's PCC. Money for renovation etc. would be thro' appeals, fund raising etc., so it was to be essentially a self-help project by the local community. Lewisham Borough Council's Amenities Committee showed interest and said that a sum of money might be available (possibly up to £1000 p.a.) for the rental of the hall from the PCC depending on the level of public support for the scheme.

A meeting was held on 25th of February at the Church Hall for all interested groups

and individuals to discuss the proposals and the practicalities involved in making the scheme a success. There was a lot of enthusiasm, offers of help, and one party started, the following Saturday, to clear overgrown shrubs which were causing some damage to the outside of the building. A group from the meeting were invited to meet members of the PCC on March 2nd.

### ST. PETER'S PCC PROPOSALS

At this meeting, the PCC put forward proposals for the hall which differed considerably from the initial scheme.

There was a feeling among PCC members that their position would be ambiguous in that they would still be the legal owners of the hall and therefore ultimately responsible for it, but would be under-represented on the House Committee. Certain legal complications were also envisaged if Lewisham Borough Council were to rent the building because of the terms of the Trust Deeds of the hall. Overall, the Church felt it wanted to play a greater part in the project and therefore proposed that instead of a House Committee, there should be a Management Committee made up of the following representatives:

Organisations regularly using the hall. . . . .	7
St. Peter's PCC . . . . .	5
Lewisham Bor' Council. . . . .	2
Brockley Neighbourhood Council. . . . .	1
Brockley Society. . . . .	1
plus	
Resource Personnel Surveyor, Builders etc. . . . .	2
Other interested members of the public. . . . .	2
(co-opted)	
<b>Total</b>	<b>20</b>

The overall task of this committee would be to manage, on behalf of St. Peter's PCC, the community centre as a viable financial enterprise.

Lewisham Council, instead of renting the building itself and handing the responsibility for its development over to the Neighbourhood Council, would be asked to make a grant to the Management Committee of the hall and this Committee, in turn, would pay a rent to St. Peter's PCC.

At a subsequent meeting between the PCC and interested groups on 31st March it was made clear that this rent would be the only money due to the PCC: fund raising by the Management Committee, rents from the groups using the hall, fees from functions etc., would be ploughed back into the hall.

The proposal that the Chairman of the Management Committee should be a PCC member was dropped and agreed that he or she would be elected from the Committee (anyone holding office in any affiliated organisation would not be allowed to stand).

The Brockley Neighbourhood Committee reaction to the PCCs proposal was one of mixed

## exchange & MART

Reliable WINDOW CLEANING SERVICE phone 692 9136

GARDEN ROLLER 20 inch diam. 20 inch wide £2 to Society Funds. Phone 692 1996

HORSE MANURE FOR COLLECTION. Bring own plastic bags. 10p a bag for Society Funds. Ring 01-692 9136 for appointment.

TENNIS OPPONENT wanted 692 2763 (evenings)

PLANTS FOR SALE Lettuce, cabbage, tomato, fuchsia, geraniums Phone 692 9136

BARTER Rebirth of ancient system, swapping skills and services. e.g. choc cake for hedge cutting, 1/2 pig for 5 yds sand etc. etc. Interested? 691-3670

MEDALS, BADGES etc. Charles Smith is collecting such items for a History of Regiments. He would be glad of any that have no sentimental value, and will give a donation to Broc. Soc.

FLYMO GRASSCUTTER CO-OP. Interested in buying a share in a rotary grasscutter? Super efficient. Super Saving. 691-3670



### SAVE WASTE PAPER

Your Waste Paper will be collected the first Saturday of the Month.

Would anyone prepared to help with the collecting please contact Fred Huthwaite.

01-692 1608 Newspaper only

### WITH THANKS

The Society's Road Rep Committee presented a gift to John James for all the help he had given in doing the major part of the early additions of the news sheet. The gift was an original etching of St. Peter's which was donated by the local artist Don Harris . . .

## BROCKLEY MIDSUMMER FAYRE



17th July

## Hilly Fields

feelings with some misgivings over whether or not the centre could be shown to be for everyone in Brockley and not too closely linked with the Church. Those involved with the BNC at the meeting were disappointed that the PCC would not agree to more than one representative from the BNC for it was felt they had possibly missed an opportunity to involve a wider range of interests through the affiliated groups of the BNC.

At a Brockley Society's Road Committee the following resolution was agreed:

It was resolved that the management of the community centre envisaged at St. Peter's Church Hall should continue under the auspices of the PCC and that the Brockley Society Road Representatives' Committee will support its management as a genuine community centre without sectional bias. We undertake to contribute by those means at our disposal, including the donation of 10% of the Society's income, to the restor-

ation and maintenance of the hall for these purposes.

The proceeds of the Brockley Society waste paper collections (which have started again) will go, in part, towards the scheme. Ward councillors will also give their support when the Amenities Committee of Lewisham Borough Council considers an application for an annual grant towards the future costs of the hall.

### THE FUTURE

The project's success in filling the large gap in the area's social and leisure facilities is now going to depend on the level of local enthusiasm and support. To repair and decorate and raise the necessary funds will be a huge job; a very rough estimate for basic work has been £15,000. If you feel that Brockley needs a social centre and would like to contribute in any way please contact:

Ron Kilsby - 01 692 5077  
or Mary Warman - 01 692 9943

# Council Tenants

This is the last in a series of three articles — the first on PRIVATE TENANTS' RIGHTS (Jan-Feb 75) & LANDLORDS AND THE LAW (Summer 75).

If anyone requires further copies of any of the three please contact the Secretary Mary Warman (12a, Montague Avenue, 692.9943).

Basically Council tenants have fewer rights than Private tenants.

If you become a council tenant you enter into a legally binding agreement with the Council's Housing Department. As with all agreements, both sides have obligations.

## YOUR OBLIGATIONS AS TENANT

- \* You must pay rent (council rents and rent rebates are too complex to be dealt with here — consult Citizens Advice Bureau).
- \* There is a statutory ban on sub-letting all or part of your council home. This means that the tenant whose name is one the rent book, may only share his or her home with their immediate family.
- It is also important to notice that unlike Rent Act cases, council tenancies do not pass as of right to widows, deserted husbands or wives etc., — you have to get the Council's consent if you want to make such a change. For example, a deserted wife is best advised to obtain a court order against her husband before applying for a transfer of the tenancy.
- \* There are restrictions on what you may do in your council home. Normally you may not carry on a business in your home, nor may you display a name plate, advertise, or keep animals without the Council's consent.
- \* Tenants normally undertake to maintain the interior of their premises in a reasonable decorative condition and to keep the premises including gardens etc., in a clean orderly condition.

If you do not comply with the conditions of your tenancy the Council has a right to forfeit the tenancy; in practise the Council serves notice to quit and takes proceedings in the County Court to recover possession of the premises.

## SECURITY OF TENURE

This aspect of the matter is in one sense pretty straightforward — council tenants have NO SECURITY OF TENURE because they are outside the protection of the Rent Acts. This means that, unlike tenants of private landlords, you cannot apply to the Rent Officer or Rent Tribunal to have your rent fixed, nor can you rely on the Rent Acts in court proceedings to oppose the council's application for possession of your home. This is the gloomy side of the picture.

In practice council tenancies are "protected" by political safeguards which make tenants relatively safe from harassment and arbitrary eviction. Local councils are wary of evicting tenants, in particular families with children because of possible political recriminations and to avoid bad publicity.

If the council serves a notice to quit it must be in writing giving 28 days clear or one calendar month to expire on a day when the rent is normally paid. Upon expiry of the notice the council has to obtain a court order for possession before the tenant can be evicted.

Strictly speaking the council is entitled to possession as of right once the notice to quit has been properly served and has expired (S.158 of the Housing Act 1957 says so). However, in a number of cases possession proceedings have been successfully opposed by asking the council to prove that the premises are required in the interest of "good housing

management". The council must give reasons to support the application e.g.

- \* that the tenant was unsatisfactory, or
- \* that the tenant had committed a breach of the tenancy agreement, or
- \* that the council required the premises for the purpose of exercising their powers 'under any enactment relating to housing'

Thus where an eviction order is being sought against a tenant who is in arrears of rent and the effect of evicting him/her would be to make the family homeless, it would neither be good sense nor good management to evict because the council would then have a responsibility to assist the evicted family with temporary accommodation when homeless. It could be argued that in such a case the Rent Action procedure with an attachment of earnings order should be used i.e. direct deduction from wages. (The DOE Circular 83/72 urges Councils to use this procedure instead of eviction).

## COUNCIL'S OBLIGATIONS

Councils seldom spell out their own obligations towards tenants — in general it amounts to an agreement to maintain the "common areas" within the group of flats or housing estate . . . . Probably the best way to ensure your rights and to see that the housing area you live in is run as you feel it should, is to join or help form a Tenants' Association.

A BARRISTER



## PLANNING APPLICATIONS

**BROCKLEY BAPTIST CHURCH**  
**Planning application has been made to demolish the existing church building in Rokeby Road. The new proposal is to redevelop the site with a block of flats on Rokeby Road and a new church in Vulcan Terrace. Anyone wishing to see the plans either contact Chris Johnson 25 Rokeby Road (692 1553) or Room 317 Catford Townhall (690.4343).**



Congratulations to Quadrant Housing Assc. for their excellent conversion & addition to 53/55 Tyrwhitt Rd.

## BENCH SAGA

In autumn of last year the Society bought two second-hand oak benches with the view to asking the Council to install them in the longer roads of the area i.e. Breakspears Rd, Tressillian, Wickham etc.

The Council duly came and inspected the benches and took them away to their workshops to be treated . . . it was later decided that because the benches were all wood . . . they were unsuitable for putting in the street so the Council agreed to install two new benches — one outside St. Peter's Church in Wickham Rd, and one in Breakspears Rd, by the junction of Harefield Rd, which they have done. then Mrs. Coombs . . phoned up the Council to ask if some benches could be put on the grassed area of St. Peter's Court flats. The Council phoned the Society and asked if the two oak benches could be used . . . it was agreed . . . the benches were duly installed . . . but on inspection it turns out that they are not the oak benches we gave to the Council. . .

It occurs to us that if we play this game right we could have benches all over Brockley and still have our two original oak benches in search of a resting place.

# TREES

Over 4,000 trees were planted throughout the Borough by Lewisham Council during the past few months. The Council have done us proud by planting a large number of trees in the Brockley Conservation area i.e. Harefield, Wickham etc.

N.B. A chainsaw has been purchased by the Society for its' pruning service (contact John Moreland 691.1141 for details).

30 ST. MARGARET'S ROAD — OWNED BY LEWISHAM COUNCIL — EMPTY FOR OVER 2 YEARS !!



There has been an average of 40-50 empty houses in the Brockley Conservation Area at any given time since it was declared a conservation area towards the end of 1973. As most of the houses are large this represents something in the region of 150 family units — it is an appalling waste of potential housing... Fortunately there is an increasing number of enlightened planners and councillors in local government who have realised the obvious sense in rehabilitating older buildings that are structurally sound — but this programme is still be-deviled by die-hard planners and politicians who are still hanging onto the 'master plan' and 'brave new world' notions where anything that is 'old' must be swept away to make way for the 'new' regardless of the harm to existing communities and the fact that 90% of the buildings they destroy are basically sound and good for another 30-50 years.

# name sakes

The following extracts were taken from a reply by the Civic Trust to a Department of the Environment Consultation Paper on the proposals to give statutory status to Neighbourhood Councils . . .

## Amenity Societies

"There has been an explosion in the growth of local amenity societies as more and more people showed themselves ready to stand up and fight for the protection of their environment"

Societies are self help groups depending on the voluntary efforts of those willing to think comprehensively about the planning problems of their area.

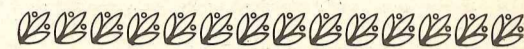
They regularly inspect the register of planning applications and make observations to the planning authority — an activity which the consultation paper quotes as one characteristic of the proposed statutory neighbourhood councils. Societies also concern themselves with many other environmental matters such as traffic proposals and the national debate on private versus public transport but do not in general involve themselves in questions of rents, rates or primarily "social" questions. Thus, if it were possible to draw a line between environ-



## STREET LIGHTING

The Council intend to improve the lighting of some streets within the Brockley Conservation Area. The society is discussing with the Engineers' Dept. the types and sizes of the lamp standards to be used.

If you have any feelings on the matter could you contact the Societies' Secretary, Mary Warman, 12a Montague Rd. (692.9943).



## 90 — 92 TRESSILLIAN ROAD, SE4

At a meeting of the Planning and Development Committee on January 29th 1976, a proposal for the use of 90-92 Tressillian Road as a residential home for homeless girls was considered. Notice was taken of local residents' views expressed in a petition (90 signatories) and 17 letters.

Permission was granted for a trial 2-year period, the conditions being that a permanent resident supervisor should be on the premises, that the number of girls should be restricted to 20, and that there should be adequate staff.

'Urban Aid' has been ranged for the project and the Borough Housing Committee has agreed to lease the property to the Management Committee which is to be formed to run the hostel.



## ASPHALT VERGE

Towards the end of last year the Council made a start on a programme to take up and re-lay all the paving slabs of over 80% of the pavements within the Brockley Conservation Area. Part of the scheme was the replacement of the paved verge with black asphalt regardless of the size and use of the street (e.g. as now exists along the whole of Wickham Rd., and one side of one part of Harefield Rd.).

Thanks to the efforts of a number of residents in the Manor Ave. Residents Association and Brockley Society together with the active support from local councillors the programme has been stopped. It was felt that in the present economic climate the expenditure was totally unjustified (apart from the argument against it on aesthetic grounds).

A proposal put forward by Councillor Cook that "the Highways & Public Works Committee be recommended to abandon the plan for the wholesale replacement of verges in asphalt and that paving slabs be replaced only where danger exists" was duly accepted and passed by the H & P.W. Committee on 2nd March '76.

mental and social problems — a line which, if it exists, is a blurred one — the concerns of amenity societies lie on the environmental side.

## Differences

The main differences between the proposed statutory neighbourhood councils and amenity societies can perhaps be put thus: a neighbourhood council will in some way be elected by the community and therefore aims to be a representative body. Amenity societies are special interest groups — albeit with very wide interests — and although many approximate to truly representative bodies they are nevertheless pressure groups. The role of the neighbourhood council and amenity society is therefore different. Council and society may at times be complementary: they may at times conflict. This is certainly the experience from rural areas where an amenity society and parish council co-exist.

A number of societies who have been consulted by the Trust do not think that the creation of neighbourhood councils in their areas would have any effect on their continued existence, some see the possibility that they might modify their role, and some consider they might join or provide some kind of forum for discussion of common problems . . .