

The Croxley Green Resident

OFFICIAL ORGAN OF THE CROXLEY GREEN RESIDENTS' AND RATEPAYERS' ASSOCIATION

No. 128

Editor — John E. Gell

Winter 1975/6

EDITORIAL

Due to necessary financial considerations, we have had to delay publication of this journal for a month; we must apologise to readers and contributors.

By the time this 'Resident' has been circulated, the long-awaited North Orbital should be open to traffic. This 3-lane dual carriageway, classified as the A.405, pending the completion of the Ringway 3 Motorway Box around London (thence the M.25), is an impressive affair.

The main 'pressure point' will however, be at Maple Cross where the lanes converge to join the single carriageway on Denham Way. Whilst sympathetic to our neighbours, we in Croxley Green, freed from the noise and inconvenience that upset so many people, especially those living on the Chorleywood Road during its construction, will find life much quieter in Watford Road without those heavy lorries ploughing along to the M.1 and M.4.

It is pleasing to report that the Government have now given Countys more money to spend on bus subsidies. It means that London Country will not have to be as savage with cuts as they had intended although it is anticipated that withdrawals on some routes will still have to be made. For this reason it is intended to press ahead with the Shopper Bus Scheme — the once daily service to Rickmansworth from rural areas — pending permission from the Traffic Commissioners. However, it is thought unlikely that licences will be granted until it is clear just which routes are now to be axed.

The Council have asked us to publicise their Public Refuse Tip at their depot in Riverside Drive, Rickmansworth. The Civil Amenity Site — as they prefer us to term it — is open from dawn to dusk seven days a week. This request has come about because of concern by our Association at the large quantity of litter that has been appearing all over Croxley Green, especially in Croxley Woods and on the Green. We take the view that Riverside Drive is too far away for the residents of Croxley Green and our Committee have discussed the idea of providing skips. There is, however, always the risk of encouraging *more* dumping by providing extra facilities.

The Council does point out, however, that they operate a free special collection service which will take bulky refuse direct from ones home to the tip. All you have to do is to ring the Council Offices. Our own experience is that the service is somewhat erratic and a reminder is often needed.

We were sorry to learn of the rejection of our suggestion to create a mini-roundabout at the Winton Drive/New Road junction. The problem that motorists face is whether to cross into Watford Road first and then turn right into New Road or trust to chance and cut the corner. Personally I take the latter option, but I say a silent prayer when so doing. We took the matter up with one or two local Councillors who seemed keen on the idea, especially as it would not involve any roadworks on the Watford Road itself. It appears that the County Surveyor is satisfied that no danger exists and that the problem will disappear when the North Orbital opens. We shall have to wait and see.

This edition of the Resident is my last as Editor. I have found it an interesting experience and I would like to thank our many contributors for their co-operation throughout the last four years or so. I have pleasure in handing over to Mrs. Denise Mangles of 41 Fuller Way, one of our hard-working Committee members and wish her the best of luck.

LOCAL ELECTIONS 1976

Elections for all the 47 seats on Three Rivers District Council take place on Thursday May 6th. Croxley Green is being split into three wards instead of two as at present, namely: Croxley Green North — 2 seats (previously 4); Croxley Green — 3 seats (new ward) and Croxley Green South — 2 seats (previously 3). At present the political composition of the Council is:

Conservatives	.	.	.	.	.	.	19
Liberal	.	.	.	.	.	.	13
Labour	.	.	.	.	.	.	12

No party has overall control.

In Croxley Green the composition at present is:

Liberal	6
Conservatives	1
Labour	0

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LOCAL GOVERNMENT FINANCE

by Mr. Clive Minty

Director of Financial Services,
Three Rivers District Council.

In most people's minds, Local Government Finance is synonymous with the rate demand and to most people an increase in the rate demand means increased expenditure by the Local Authorities in the area. Many people again identify the District Council who are responsible for collecting the rate as being the Authority responsible for the increase.

In fact, these are fallacies and, in the present controversy surrounding rates, it is important that people should realise that the rate demand is influenced by factors complete outside the control of local government and that the rate demand is composed of more than just District Council expenditure.

First, Local Government net expenditure (after charging for some services) is financed by government grants and rates.

The Government now meets two thirds of Local Government current expenditure and it is only the remaining one third which falls on the rates. The proportion met by the Government rises each year and the present rate support grant (i.e. 66.5%) stood at 54% in 1967/8. The amount of relevant expenditure in 1975/6 was £6,060 million and the rate support grant was a massive £4,705 million.

This grant comprises three elements:

	£ Million
Domestic	619
Resources	1,328
Needs	2,748
	<u>4,705</u>

Apart from the problem of how the total should be divided between these three elements, further complications arise when the grant is apportioned to individual Authorities.

Local Government has no control over either of these decisions but they do have great consequences

which can either provide unexpected bonuses or accentuate the problems of Local Authorities.

Because of the ratio of grant aid, it follows that if the Government underestimate the expenditure by say 3% (which in relation to the total would be an acceptable variation) this naturally has a 9% effect on the Local Government, and therefore, on the ratepayer.

Turning to the question of apportioning the grant between Authorities it has been apparent that the formulae used has in recent years consistently worked to the benefit of the large conurbations. Thus, the ratepayers have had to find extra cash from year to year simply because it is on the receiving end of a formulae weighted against it — in 1976/7 alone this is likely to be equivalent to over £4m.

Domestic Ratepayers will also recall that following the general election in February 1974 the domestic element of grant which for 1974/5 had been fixed at 16.5 pence in the £ was reduced to 13 pence and again this had affected adversely the rate demand of every householder in the area without the Local Authorities being able to control that decision in any way whatsoever.

The bonus side of this decision went in the main to the Welsh Authorities, where the domestic relief was fixed at 33.5 pence, enabling nearly every Authority in the Principality to reduce its rate in 1974/5.

Enough has been said to demonstrate the staggering effects the level of and distribution of the support grant can and does have on individual Authorities.

The task of collecting the rates falls at the Local District Council level and it is the District Council which bears the brunt of any criticisms. In fact, their expenditure only accounts for one quarter of the rate demand with the County Council, who provide the major services, such as education, Police etc., share being two thirds. The balance comes from the sewerage and sewerage disposal precept from the Thames Water Authority and the precepts of the Parish Councils where these exist.

The Three Rivers Council started its considerations of the budget for 1975/6, in November, 1974 and did

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not complete the exercise until late February 1975, after repeated consideration by all the Committees responsible for the various services. Repeated efforts at reducing the rate levels resulted in reductions in expenditure totalling £286,000 and increases in income from charges of £38,000. The final budget for net expenditure was £2,210,972 and this was the minimum figure necessary to maintain the services the Council provides. During the budget deliberation a "standstill" attitude soon became necessary and many improvements to services were regrettably abandoned.

Local Government is a labour intensive industry and this applies to the Three Rivers budget where labour accounts for nearly 50% of all expenditure. Loan charges in respect of capital assets provided accounts for a further 15% and it is obviously necessary to control these two items as closely as possible. This is done by a strict control over staff numbers and as far as capital expenditure is concerned a policy of no new schemes, unless these were of an operational nature (e.g. a new or improved Council depot is an urgent need and it is hoped that a new scheme will start in the near future) was adopted by the Council.

One of the major District Council services is municipal housing and whilst this is largely self-balancing — by rents and Government subsidy — the Council is under a statutory duty to meet any deficit from the General Rate Fund. The Council increased rents by £1 per week for the financial year 1975/6 and this produced nearly £200,000 which would otherwise have fallen on the ratepayers.

The two dominant factors in the budget were the need to provide a working balance and the effect of inflation. These two factors alone accounted for an increase of over 26%. The view taken of inflation trends in the budget is so far turning out to be about right and it is an encouraging sign for next year's (1976/7), budget, although there will still be a need to exercise rigorous control when the budget considerations get under way.

DISEASED TREES

Elm trees affected by Dutch Elm disease and subject to Tree Preservation Orders have been or are about to be felled at the entrance to McInerney House, The Green; adjacent to "Carfax", Parrots Close, The Green and 26 trees at Scots Hill House site. Replacement trees are to be planted in all cases.

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COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION

Having completed their house to house census in which residents' ideas on the type of facilities they would like to see provided were sought, the Community Association have now approached the Council with a view to a loan to help them with their next step. It is proposed to rent some land next to the Youth Centre and then to erect a prefabricated concrete building which would cost in the region of £40,000.

In view of the economic situation, it is understood that a suitable loan will not be forthcoming at the moment, although there is considerable Council interest in the project. A Sub-Committee of four councillors has been set up to liaise with officers of the Community Association.

CRESCENT CARS

It has been finally agreed that the taxi firm can use the Red House Car Park in Watford Road, but there are a number of conditions to the deal. The position is slightly complicated by the fact that the Council lease the car park from the brewers who own it. The conditions are (a) that no specific parking spaces are to be reserved; (b) cars waiting in the car park for the purpose of private hire not to exceed four in number at any one time; (c) the driver of a private hire car waiting in the car park is not to ply for hire or accept passengers for hire; (d) permission granted to be subject to review by the Council at any time.

One brighter note can be directed to the residents of Ascot Court in Winton Drive. It had originally been proposed to place a cab rank on the opposite side of the road which resulted in many objections from the residents.

The outcome is not, however, very satisfactory for Crescent Cars, but it appears to be the best way out of a difficult situation.

Residents' Association

Items discussed at recent monthly meetings have included the following:

a) Crescent cars; b) New Road/Winton Drive, suggested roundabout; c) Zebra crossing re-siting at Watford Road; d) Fuller Way — pruning of trees; e) Setting up of 'Watch-dog committee to monitor council on rate levels'; f) Buses; g) Shopper bus; h) Planning applications; i) Pelican crossing on Scots Hill; j) Tithe Barn; k) Motor cycles on Common Moor; l) Refuse disposal and many other varied subjects.

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ACTION ON THE RATES

Members will probably be aware from reports in the local press that four local Residents Associations have joined in the formation of a Committee to look at the rates. The four Associations concerned are from Carpenders Park, Rickmansworth, Chorleywood and Croxley. The Committee first met in November 1975 and decided upon a co-ordinated approach to the District Council and local Councillors in an effort to obtain information about the expected rate budget for 1976/77. In particular we were interested in staffing levels in Three Rivers District Council, any capital projects in the pipeline for the forthcoming financial year, and the effect on services if any rise in the rates were to be reduced to the minimum level.

It would be nice to report that as a result of our efforts a dramatic cut in the rates had been achieved. This was not, of course, to be expected. The most that we had hoped for was to improve communications about the rates and to encourage the provision of more information on the subject by Three Rivers District Council. To this end we have written to the Chief Executive of the Council and to each of the local Councillors, have raised the matter at the Three Rivers (Rickmansworth) Consultative Committee, and have spoken to some of the local Councillors. All concerned have shown an encouraging willingness to co-operate. At the last meeting of the Council's Co-ordination Committee it was agreed that in future discussions on all Council committees about the rates would be open to the public, whereas in the past all such discussions have taken place in private session. This decision, in effect, frees local Councillors to talk about the rate budget more openly with local Associations and with members of the public in general. This Association is actively pursuing meetings with our Councillors in Croxley and it is hoped that by the time this magazine

is published these meetings will have taken place.

We are unfortunately unable at this stage to give details of the rates prospect for 1976/77. It is probably true to say that we started our efforts a little late in the day to have much effect on the next rate demand. From reports we have received it appears that all Council Committees are attempting to cut their budgets to the bare minimum. Whether their efforts will be enough in the eyes of the public time will tell.

This Association will continue with the other Residents Associations involved to maintain a close interest in the rates, both at District and County level. We will be keeping a watch on Council expenditure and look forward to a continuing co-operation with the local Councillors to this end. We hope that we have the support of you, the members of this Association, and would welcome your views.

Peter Furr.

**SOUTH-WEST HERTS COMMUNITY
HEALTH COUNCIL**

A community generally, such as that served by the Croxley Green Community Association, is fairly small and reasonably compact. The community which a Community Health Council (CHC) serves may be a widespread area with a quarter of a million inhabitants. Such is the situation in South-West Herts where your local CHC is at work.

Maybe you have not heard of the South-West Herts CHC or only vaguely know that CHCs exist. Therefore, perhaps I ought to say something about this fairly new idea to involve the consumer in the shaping of the National Health Service. On the 1st April 1974, not only did the reorganisation of local government become operative, but also the National Health Service Reorganisation Act (1973).

In England, for instance, as a part of this reorganisation there are now 14 Regional Health Authorities to which 90 Area Health Authorities are responsible. Within the Areas there are Health Districts. Herts has an Area Health Authority under the North-West Thames RHA. This Area is divided into four Health Districts of which South-West Herts is one. Our District which includes places such as Croxley Green, Bushey, Watford, Rickmansworth, Abbots Langley and Radlett, covers more than one local government territory. In fact three District Councils — Three Rivers, Watford and Hertsmere which among other duties are responsible for environmental health and housing, operate in the Health District.

In each Health District a team of experts manage the services on behalf of the NHS. This District Management Team (DMT) as it is known, consists of an Administrator, a Finance Officer, a Community Physician and a District Nursing Officer. Apart from these full-time officials, part-time service is given by representatives of the consultants and general practitioners in the District.

In South-West Herts as in other Health Districts, the CHC has a duty to represent consumer interest. Most Health Council members have been surprised at the amount of work that has come their way. The first year — South-West Herts CHC did not hold its first meeting until late September 1974 — was spent setting up an office, engaging staff, becoming informed about health care provision and trying to communicate with the public.

What are the duties of CHCs, you may ask? Well, they need to look closely at the adequacy and effectiveness of services in the Districts. The hospitals

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might be thought to be the obvious objects of their scrutiny but one realises that maternity and child welfare, social medical and general practitioner services are used by far more people. The CHCs comment on AHA plans for the provision and development of services as well as proposed changes. For instance, if a hospital is scheduled for closure the appropriate CHC has to be consulted before action is taken.

It is important for the CHC to have good contact especially with the DMT and to build up positive relationships. However, this does not mean the CHC loses its independence or will not take up complaints of a general nature. As regards individual complaints, it has no legal duty to follow these up, but you will find that South-West Herts CHC are ready with advice on where to channel such a complaint and eager to know what happens to it.

Your CHC is keen to build up contacts with the public and has a Committee which is concerned with communication—if it does not succeed it might as well not exist. You may not know that members of the public as well as the press, are entitled to attend meetings of the CHC which are held about every two months in various parts of the Health District. Your Council has met in Watford, Leavesden, Rickmansworth, Abbots Langley and Croxley Green itself. At Council's last meeting in Abbots Langley, after the formal business had been completed, a discussion on abortion took place in which several members of the public most helpfully took part. But of course, only a few visitors come to CHC meetings so the Council has formed a panel of speakers whose members accept invitations to speak to a variety of organisations and are eager to increase these opportunities to meet the public, not only to speak but to listen to the consumers' views.

Another opportunity for members of the public to meet CHC members is at a "Time to Talk" session which is held on the third Saturday in each month at:

The CHC Office,
21, Upton Road,
Watford.
(Telephone: Watford 45285)
from 10 am-1 pm.

Two Council members are present on these occasions to listen to complaints, discuss problems and to exchange ideas. The Secretary of your CHC, Barrie Taylor, would be glad to hear from you at the above address if you would like to know more about any of the matters raised.

Planning a reception or a party?

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NATIONAL FEDERATION OF OLD AGE PENSIONS ASSOCIATIONS Croxley Green Branch

The National Federation which is non-party political and non sectarian, is holding an area rally in the Watford Town Hall on Monday, March 29th at 2 pm, doors open 1.30 pm.

The main speaker will be Mrs. Norah Powell, the National Vice-President, who has given over 25 years' service to the interest of pensioners and old age pensioners in particular. Mrs. Powell is part of a team who regularly meet Government ministers and the all party committee on pensions.

This is a chance to hear and question a magnetic speaker and personality at first hand, on the work being done for both present and future pensioners at government level.

We are hoping to have the interest and attendance of the general public, a block of tickets have been reserved for this purpose.

May we invite you to come along — tickets 5p, obtainable from W. Walmsley, 149 New Road, telephone: Rickmansworth 74517. Light refreshments will be on sale before the meeting and during the interval.

TRAFFIC CONDITIONS — WINTON DRIVE/BALDWINS LANE

Complaints have been received concerning the traffic hazard at the staggered road junction of Links Way/Winton Drive & Baldwins Lane. Careless drivers are cutting the corner of Winton Drive by entering on the wrong side of the road from Baldwins Lane. The Council have suggested two ways of improving the situation, namely the re-alignment of the centre line of Winton Drive towards Links Way, to produce something closer to a right angle with Baldwins Lane, thereby improving entry into Winton Drive, or secondly by the provision of a refuge in the centre of Winton Drive which would force drivers on to the correct side of the road. It was finally decided that the centre line marked in Winton Drive should now be repositioned and that further consideration be given to this junction after the opening of the North Orbital Road.

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CROXLEY CAMERA CLUB

On Show

Stimulated by the success of the showing of colour slides at the Revels on The Green during the past few years, the Croxley Camera Club has expanded its activities to the showing of photographs and transparencies for all to enjoy. A week-long exhibition was staged in the Croxley Green Library during November when about 200 slides and 60 photographs were mounted on specially designed panels made by club members. This exhibition is being repeated in the Rickmansworth Library from 5th to 10th February. By invitation the Club staged similar exhibitions at the Rickmansworth Market and the Rickmansworth Horticultural Society Autumn Show.

Club members seem keener than ever before partly because beginners realise they are capable of producing pictures equally as good as proficient members, and while the competitive spirit is part of the club's activities (it has won the first round for the Chiltern Cup), visiting speakers bring such subjects as moths and insect enlargements, historic Croxley, portraiture, the Three Capes, the Garden of Eden, and so on.

On 26th January the Club was host to Kodak's Colour Viewpoint 1976 being shown at Watersmeet.

If you would like to join Croxley Camera Club, please visit us any Wednesday evening in the hall of St. Oswalds Church, and seize the opportunity to improve your photography.

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THREE RIVERS D.C.

Council meetings are held in halls throughout the district commencing at 7.30 pm. All are open to the Press and public.

Council:

March 9th	.	.	.	.	.	.	Sarratt Village Hall
April 27th	.	.	.	.	.	.	Watersmeet

Planning:

February 19th	.	.	.	.	.	.	Oxhey Pavilion
March 16th	.	.	.	.	.	.	Chorleywood House
April 8th	.	.	.	.	.	.	Basing House

Housing:

February 12th	.	.	.	.	.	.	Chorleywood House
March 4th	.	.	.	.	.	.	Chorleywood House
March 30th	.	.	.	.	.	.	Sarratt Village Hall

Co-ordination:

February 23rd	.	.	.	.	.	.	Basing House
April 13th	.	.	.	.	.	.	Oxhey Pavilion

Highway, Works & Leisure:

February 10th	.	.	.	.	.	.	Chorleywood House
March 25th	.	.	.	.	.	.	Basing House.

Community Services:

February 5th	Basing House.
March 23rd	Chorleywood House

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CROXLEY GREEN SOCIETY

Revels Procession

Saturday 19th June 1976.

The Hon. Sec. of the Procession Sub-Committee, Miss K.M. Moss writes:

"As you know, we have not been idle since the '75 Revels and with your help and support, we aim for a bigger and better Procession for 1976.

We made the suggestion of a Theme in the hope that this would stir your enthusiasm but it IS only a suggestion, and we would welcome your entry. If you would like to enter a decorated car or float and can provide your own transport, this is excellent, but if you need our help do drop me a line or telephone - time doesn't stand still and we do want to avoid that last minute rush.

Please say 'YES, we would like to join in the fun' and write to Miss Moss at 4, Lindiswara Court, 41 Watford Road or telephone (after 6 pm), Rickmansworth 77048".

MRS. M. WISE

Mrs. M. Wise, 28 Kenilworth Drive, wishes to thank her friends and neighbours for buying their Christmas Cards from her. Due to their support a cheque for £52 was given to the Welcome Club.

BARTON WAY DRESSING ROOMS

Complaints have been received from visiting football teams at the inadequate changing facilities at the Barton Way Recreation Ground. It has been pointed out that there are no lights to change by on Winter evenings, no showers and poor toilet facilities.

The Council have announced that the renewal of the Pavilion will be included in the draft capital estimates for 1977/8. However, they point out that the changing facilities would be at "the lowest level" provided by the Council once the new Scotsbridge Pavilion was completed. We are not quite sure what lowest level means, but we can hazard a guess.

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Holiday Adventure '76

We feel that the Adventure programme is now so well known by the residents, that we do not need to give full details. The theme this year is based on Olympics '76, but as we are unable to further increase the number of children whom we can accommodate, we would recommend that parents should enrol their young people as soon as possible to ensure a place in the desired session.

Adventure '76 is for the 5-12 year olds and Junior Adventure is for the tinies of three and four.

Enrolment can be arranged by sending the coupon to the address given, or by telephoning: Adventure Office on Watford 44119.

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Psalm 117.

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ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Our A.G.M. was held on the 10th November at All Saints Church Hall. Unfortunately, it coincided with the overhauling of the central heating system in the hall, so all due thanks to those of you who stuck with us.

One sad note was the resignation of our President, Mr. John Broome. At the age of 86, he was finding it difficult to turn out on cold winter evenings, added to this was the ill-health of his wife. After all these years, we are very sorry to see him go and we wish Mr. & Mrs. Broome better health for the future.

In his place Mr. Ben Tullett was unanimously elected. Ben needs no introduction from anyone, least of all the 'older' generation of Croxley folk.

After the formal business we were pleased to hear from the Director of Financial Services of Three Rivers D.C., Mr. Clive Minty, who gave us a very informative talk on local Government finance. For the benefit of members not present at the meeting, Mr. Minty has written us an article in this edition which includes most of the points he raised in his talk. We would like to express our grateful thanks for his services.

In response to our request for more committee members we were pleased to welcome Mr. J. Linhart of Gadebank, Cassiobridge.

Our printers have told us that the cost of producing the 'Resident' will have to be raised in the very near future, so we are now having to raise advertising rates and increase the subscription to 15p a year from 12½p – not by any standards excessive.

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Mr. P.R. Furr, 15 Winton Crescent.

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EDITOR'S NOTE

The Editor would be pleased to receive articles or letters concerning matters of local interest. Contributions, please for the Spring issue must be sent by the 30th April to Mrs. D. Mangles, 41 Fuller Way, Telephone: Rickmansworth 77923.

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