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THE

# CROXLEY

# RESIDENT

OFFICIAL ORGAN OF CROXLEY GREEN RESIDENTS' AND RATEPAYERS' ASSOCIATION

No. 47.

Editor—A. T. THOMSON, 15 Lewes Way.

No. 4—1953.

## THIS SPECIAL EDITION IS OF VITAL CONCERN

### THE PROPOSALS

In this edition are published plans for the erection of a shopping arcade on the site commonly known as "Pitkins Land", at the junction of Baldwins Lane and Watford Road.

We ask you to study these closely and critically.

### THE FACTS

On page 3 a summary of the history and facts relating to this area of Croxley is provided. It is of particular importance and paramount relevance to the whole vexed question of shops, the lack of which some 7,000 people have suffered for seventeen long years. Frankly, it is difficult to avoid concluding that not a few of the Councillors representing Mill End, Moor Park and Rickmansworth Wards are unacquainted with many of these facts.

On page 4 are published some of the objections put forward against this project, the counter-criticisms and, most important of all, the advantages which would accrue to the shopper, to the housewife and to the sorely-tried ratepayers in this area.

### THE PROMISES

This Association **demand**s, on behalf of the public, adequate shopping facilities for Croxley Green. Whether their location is Baldwins Lane or Winton Drive is secondary to the desperate need of a population now approaching 8,000. Time after time proposals have been rejected by Rickmansworth Council. Through the medium of their "Town Planning" the public has been fobbed off with grandiose schemes of an Open Space at this locality and the promise of desperately needed shops at Winton Drive. In all good faith these plans were accepted, but now as we approach 1954, we find the schemes they recommended under the 1947 Planning Act remain—paper plans! Worse—the Council now admit they have no intention of proceeding with the development of the Winton Drive site for the time being.

### COMMON SENSE

So far as the Open Space is concerned, would it be pertinent to ask the Council whether it was in the knowledge that the cost of the site as an Open Space would have rocketed the rates, that it allowed the option to purchase lapse in November, 1952?

On September 29th a Councillor suggested that "if we have to pay £17,000 we will have to pay £17,000". The "we" is the ratepayers. But we the ratepayers can

speak for ourselves and we say to the Council: "Why spend £17,000 for a site which can be built to provide, without costing the ratepayer a penny, the shops your Council persistently deny us here or at Winton Drive?"

We also suggest Rickmansworth Council gets a little closer to the public it represents and to admit its scheme, for Open Spaces and shops for Croxley, though well intended, are **not** producing shops—and worse—are proposing to empty the poor ratepayers' pockets to the tune of thousands of pounds for that very dubious privilege!

### THE ONLY HOPE

It is in view of the Council's attitude, its admission not to proceed with Winton Drive and the frustration of seventeen years, that the public must assert its rights. We are of the opinion that our best, indeed our only choice, is to support the site in Baldwins Lane as our one hope and solution for shops. This is the last opportunity Croxley ratepayers will have to secure these facilities at no cost to the rates. Similarly it will be the last opportunity to avoid the sum stated to be £17,000 being paid out of the rates for, **and let there be no misunderstanding**, if the shops are not permitted here the Council will be obliged to buy.

The plans outlined in this edition were rejected by Rickmansworth Town Planning Committee and at the open meeting of all Councillors, on September 29th, a vote of eleven to five confirmed that rejection. It was noticeable that of the Croxley Councillors present the proposals down. Neither of these Councillors were Messrs. Groves and Jones joined the Rickmansworth, Mill End and Moor Park block of Councillors who voted present when the proposals were considered by the Town Planning Committee on September 8th, nor did they take the opportunity to express their opinions or reasons for opposing the almost united stand taken by their fellow Croxley Councillors.

### YOUR DECISION

Finally, whatever your considered decision on this scheme may be, we are confident that your deliberations took a little more time than the Council did on September 29th. It took only approximately ten minutes of the Council's time to discuss and reject the scheme—less than half the time spent in discussing a children's cycle skid track at Mill End!

Thus are Croxley's vital needs discerned, discussed—and dismissed.

Printers error—these lines should read—Messrs. Groves and Jones joined the Rickmansworth, Mill End and Moor Park block of Councillors who voted the proposals down. Neither of these Councillors were

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## CHAIRMAN'S LETTER

As the Annual General Meeting of the Association draws near, it is perhaps fitting that we should look back through the past year and consider whether we have done all possible to ensure the interests of our members—the residents and ratepayers—have received the attention they deserve. Many matters have been considered and dealt with by your Executive Committee and, as is customary, your Association has gone about its business in a quiet and dignified manner without fuss or cheap publicity.

Times, like individuals and their thoughts, change continually and those who have been elected to serve us as Councillors have had many diverse matters to consider and on which to pronounce their decisions. That some of these decisions are not wholly unanimous, or that they are received by the electors with mixed feelings, is fully understood and, even though the majority of electors may dislike or disagree with a particular ruling, provided they are satisfied that due consideration has been given to all the factors involved, there is no real quarrel.

A particular issue is causing some concern at the present time and in this case there would, unfortunately, appear to be an example of hasty decisions, lack of consideration of the whole factors, and a complete disregard of the electors' opinions.

The Croxley Green Residents' and Ratepayers' Association deliberately withdrew from contesting local elections in the belief that by so doing the elected representative could show a goodly proportion of the electorate as having voted for him. There could be no question of "splitting the vote". This withdrawal was not an invitation to the Council to believe we had no further interests—in fact, rather the contrary, as our active intervention on occasions—and in respect of certain issues has markedly shown.

Having many times said that although our first interest is Croxley Green, we nevertheless declared our sphere of interest to be the whole R.U.D.C. area, we have now to consider the effect of votes cast in Council by Councillors not resident or elected for wards in Croxley Green.

It is perhaps our duty to consider whether:—

"The time has come," the Walrus said,

"To talk of many things:

Of Shops, and Votes, and Councillors,

Of Skid Tracks and of Swings,

And whether at Election times—

An Independent—reason brings."

**WOOLS. HABERDASHERY. CHILDREN'S WEAR**



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## Important Notice

### ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

TO ALL MEMBERS—

- (1) The A.G.M. will be held in Dickinson Guildhouse Science Room on Friday, 27th November, 1953, at 8 p.m.
- (2) The Business will include the following:—  
Minutes of last Annual General Meeting;  
Matters arising from Minutes;  
Chairman's, Secretary's and Treasurer's Reports;  
Election of Officers and Committee;  
Other Business.
- (3) Nominations for Officers and/or Committee, duly proposed and seconded, to be submitted to the Secretary not later than Tuesday, 24th November, 1953.
- (4) Items for discussion under "Other Business" to be submitted to Secretary by the same date.
- (5) All members should endeavour to attend. Admission by membership card. New members enrolled at the door.

T. HOEY (Hon. Secretary),  
Croxley Green Residents' and  
Ratepayers' Assn.

9 Harvey Road,  
Croxley Green.

*(continued from previous column)*

Need we say more or are we to see a change of heart and action which will make such thoughts unnecessary. It would be pleasing to have an assurance which might dispel the widespread belief that such matters as shops for Croxley Green are decided (at private meetings prior to the official deliberations) at a Rickmansworth or Moor Park address.

T. POOLEY.

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- 1936. Plans for shop sites on Pitkin's Land submitted to Rickmansworth Council **AND APPROVED.**
- 1937. Land presented to Council to widen, develop and improve the corner.
- 1938. Permission granted to erect fourteen shops and a filling station.
- 1939. Preparation of sites commenced; later suspended by war.
- 1940/46. National emergency.
- 1947. Plans re-submitted, but this time permission refused on the grounds that it was no longer a proper site and contrary to Council's plans as an Open Space and to the Greater London Plan. Under the 1947 Town Planning Act, Winton Drive site zoned as shopping site.
- 1948. No developments.
- 1949. Fresh plans submitted for eight shops. These, too, refused. The Council opposed on the grounds that site was not satisfactorily located, was too near a main road junction; "provision" was made elsewhere in Croxley for shops and **these would be surplus.** This "provision" was, roughly, for six to eight shops at the top (Green) end of Baldwins Lane, and some twelve to fifteen at Winton Drive.
- 1950. No developments—and no shops.
- 1951. No developments—and still no shops.
- 1952. Site on Pitkin's Land designated as Open Space in County Plan: otherwise no developments and still no shops anywhere.
- 1953. Proposals laid before Council as per plans on pages 4 and 5 of this issue. Rejected on the grounds that site—
  - (a) not satisfactorily located;
  - (b) adjacent to a busy main road and junction;
  - (c) provision made elsewhere in Croxley, and present proposals would be surplus to requirements;
  - (d) was already proposed in County Plan as an Open Space.

All these criticisms are considered fully in the next page, but with regard to (c) particularly, it might be pertinent to remind the Council that **four years after** its dismissal of proposals as "surplus" there is not one single solitary shop in Croxley North, neither at the top nor bottom of Baldwins Lane, nor at Winton Drive, nor anywhere else.

This is a summary of events in relation to shops.

With the greatest of goodwill in the world we can only submit that it is a sad and pitiful story of the accomplishment of Nothing: we ask for shop premises and the Council give shop promises—and empty ones at that, too.

Lord Silkin, perhaps better known formerly as Mr. Lewis Silkin, will be remembered as the Minister of Town and Country Planning in the years 1945 to 1950. Prior to 1945 he was Chairman of London County Council Planning Committee. He is perhaps one of the greatest experts on Town and Country Planning in this island.

Yet strangely enough at a recent conference of planners held a few weeks ago, he had some extraordinary comments to make on the present-day situation and on the "unhelpful and obstructive" way planners used the powers he gave them.

Lord Silkin—who became a legal consultant specialising in town planning on leaving the Government—is reported:—

"Since I have ceased to be in the Government I have had to apply to local authorities for permission to develop. Instead of them being only too ready to give permission where there was no objection, I found every possible reluctance, every possible difficulty put in my way—some legitimate, some not legitimate—but always on points which could be met by five minutes' conversation.

"Too many local authorities regard it as their job to stop development rather than to encourage it.

"If it is possible to say 'No' some local authorities prefer to say 'No' rather than 'Yes'."

But, Lord Silkin added, the rule should be this: "The private developer is entitled to develop the land as he wishes. The only ground for refusing permission is if he is seeking to do something injurious to the public."

The former Minister went on to say that the cost of Government inquiries to hear objections against town planning developments was tremendous, both for the Government and the objectors.

Now such comments from such an authority are indeed significant. Here in Croxley we cannot help but ponder on the reference to "unhelpful and obstructive" way planners used the powers given to them: We wonder at planners who put "every possible difficulty" in the way. We meditate on local authorities who "stop development rather than to encourage it" and muse on authorities who "prefer to say 'No' rather than 'Yes'". And we puzzle how shops on this site could be "injurious to the public".

Finally, after having pondered and wondered and meditated and mused we must be forgiven for speculating whether, prior to his comments, Lord Silkin had applied to develop a site in Croxley. We would not be at all surprised!

# Your Own Association

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## WHAT THE PLANS WOULD PROVIDE

**SHOPS:** Fourteen, plus two offices.

**FLATS:** Between thirty and forty, providing living accommodation for about 100 people. In this respect alone the project is worthy of the closest examination with housing such an acute problem.

**ASSEMBLY HALL:** As the existing facilities in Croxley are very limited, this hall would be a great asset, being available for dances, dinners and similar social events, concerts and amateur dramatics, etc.

**CAR PARK:** This would be available for patrons and situated behind the main building.

**RATES:** The cost of development of the site would be the responsibility of the developer and no burden to the rates. On the other hand, it would produce revenue and at present levels may provide income equivalent to a fourpenny or sixpenny rate. Compare this with a possible addition of about 2s. in the pound if the site is developed as an "Open Space".

**TRANSPORT:** All bus routes from every part of Croxley are within easy access.

## NOW FOR THE CRITICISMS

### Road Safety

The Council say "the site is adjacent to a busy main road and junction". True, but so is Cassiobury Park and it is none the less safe. It is where the shops are in the site that is important. From the plans it will be seen—

- (a) the shops are **not** on the main (Watford) road, nor even on Baldwins Lane;
- (b) they are on a private service road, debarred to through-traffic;
- (c) the only entrance/exit to this service road is from Baldwins Lane.

Perhaps Rickmansworth Council would care to tell the public, and particularly shoppers with prams and small children, how many shopping areas within ten miles of Croxley can boast of one-tenth of those safeguards?

There seems, to say the least of it, some irony in the fact that the Chairman of Rickmansworth Highways Committee, Councillor Cox, and who is also a member of the Road Safety Committee, has expressed his complete approval of the safety precautions. Did the Town Planning Committee consult the Highways and Road Safety Committees on this aspect of the plans?

Further comment is perhaps unnecessary.

### Location : Provision elsewhere

The Council regard the site as "not satisfactorily located". Strangely it was regarded as satisfactory until 1949 when the Council designated Winton Drive in lieu. Now, all other things being equal, and so far as actual geography or location is concerned, the main difference between the two sites is whether the shops are on one side of the bridge over Baldwins Lane or on the other side—in distance another 200 yards away approximately. But, unfortunately, other things are not equal.

Firstly, there is the matter of cost to the ratepayers. As already stated, the plans opposite would not cost the rates a penny, and, in fact, would help to reduce them. But if the Council's proposals go through they may cost the ratepayers a sum estimated at £17,000 if this site is purchased as an Open Space, plus the annual cost of upkeep and maintenance as such.

### As an Open Site

Is it worth expenditure of a sum in this region? Cost and maintenance on this level might increase the rates by nearly 2s. in the £. It is a matter of opinion, but frankly we say "No". One of the Rickmansworth Councillors suggested he would like to see this side of

the river as equally pleasant as the other. So would we, but his reasoning is difficult to follow when it is considered the site's four boundaries would be the Met. Railway, a sawmill and timber yard (including derricks) on the left flank, another timber yard and railway station opposite, and (in the future) a public house on the right flank.

If the Council contend it unsafe on road safety grounds for shops, how can it miraculously become so safe as an Open Space?

### Winton Drive

Having abandoned intentions to build shops here themselves, presumably the Council hope a private builder will come along. But has there been any offers? Let us be practical. To build twelve to fifteen shops at this corner where there is a dangerous gradient approaching that of Scots Hill would necessitate heavy excavation and foundation costs and a retaining wall estimated at twenty feet. Add that expense to the cost of the land, approximately £8,000 to £10,000, and any builder would look twice. Even if one were to take the plunge those costs would be reflected in high rentals and traders do not look for premises with high rents. To-day's applicants for shops on paper might not be so keen when the leases were seen: and empty shops neither repay nor produce rating income.

These facts have not been stressed sufficiently in the past to the public in Croxley, although the absence of any rush by developers may have significance for those very reasons. They may indeed have been contributing factors to the Council decisions—

- (1) not to build shops;
- (2) to take no further action on the Winton Drive site.

This Association has always had some misgivings concerning the Winton Drive site, but we accepted the Council's original undertakings. Unfortunately, those misgivings proved justified. The premises are like the promises—empty.

## OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

### How Soon?

Subject to normal supplies and materials the developers for the plans opposite consider shops would be available within six to nine months.

### Transport

Many residents shop once or twice a week at Watford. Since 1945 bus fares have practically doubled and few of us have not suffered from the miserable queueing and waiting for buses in the wet and cold at Market Street or Clarendon Corner.

### Traders

They go into business where there is most trade. The site opposite is readily available to all parts of Croxley and to Watford. Could the same be said of any other site? The more trade the better and greater the service and choice.

## CONCLUSION

*We have published the facts, criticisms and counter-criticisms; the advantages and disadvantages. In so doing the Council may consider it has received some hard knocks. Our only regret is that we have been forced to provide them. But the Council has only itself to blame. It has provided Croxley with two dis-services. It has made little attempt to find out what the public want and need. It has unforgivably misled the public with the promises of Winton Drive and stifled all alternatives in the process. It has promised shops year after year until events have revealed the un-economic futility of their planning under the 1947 Act.*

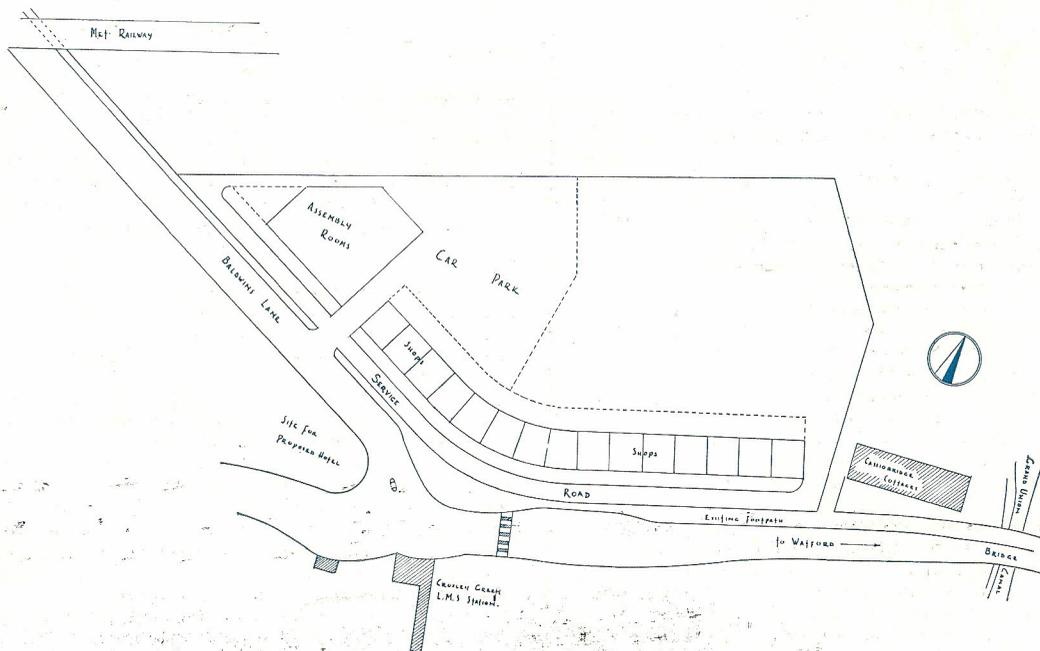
**Clearly the public of Croxley must make its own voice heard by public petition at the Court of Appeal within the next few weeks.**

**It is Croxley's last and only opportunity, and if you as a ratepayer, resident or voter agree we must use the only weapon the public has—the petition on page 7.**

# ARTIST'S DRAWING



# LINE PLAN



# PETITION

To: THE MINISTER OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT AND PLANNING,  
HERTS COUNTY COUNCIL,  
RICKMANSWORTH URBAN DISTRICT COUNCIL,  
and such other body or whomsoever it may concern.

I, the undersigned, an adult ratepayer, resident or voter, have carefully examined the proposed plans for the provision of shopping facilities on the site at the lower (east) end of Baldwin's Lane and adjoining Watford Road, Croxley Green; have considered the Rickmansworth Town Planning Committee's recommendations with regard to this and other sites in Croxley Green and do most sincerely petition that permission be granted for the development of this particular site on the lines of the proposed plans by Messrs. A. Pitkin Ltd. to provide the shopping facilities which are, and have been, so desperately needed for so many years.

Signature	Address	Date
.....	.....Croxley Green.	/ /1953
.....	.....Croxley Green.	/ /1953
.....	.....Croxley Green.	/ /1953
.....	.....Croxley Green.	/ /1953

KEEP THIS CAREFULLY. IT WILL BE CALLED FOR WITHIN A FEW DAYS.

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## SOCIAL SIDE

### GALA DANCE

As we have been unsuccessful in booking All Saints' Hall for New Year's Eve, we propose making our dance on the 19th December our Gala Night.

As usual, the Andre Simone Band will be in attendance with Mr. and Mrs. Higgs as demonstrators, and Mr. Jack Robinson as our congenial M.C.

Old patrons know they are assured of a happy evening and new ones need have no doubts.

Come along and join in the fun.

Tickets obtainable from the usual sources.

**NOTE — 19th DEC. — IN YOUR DIARY**

### SALE OF WORK

The Croxley Green Welcome Club invite you to drop in to a Sale of Work to be held in the Dickinson Guildhouse at 3 p.m. on November 28th, 1953.

The work of the club is to make leisure a pleasure for Old Age Pensioners. These are the people who have suffered, and still suffer, more than any other in a post-war world of high cost of living.

So come along, give your support in the good work being done and help to make the pensioners know they are not forgotten:—

“ And joy and laughter banished tears  
In the sere and mellow years.”

### PLAY

The Croxley Theatre Club will present their next production at the Dickinson Guildhouse, Croxley, on Thursday and Friday, 3rd and 4th December.

Their selection on this occasion is “ But Once a Year ”—by Falkland Cary, and the Club are looking forward to seeing their friends on one of these dates.

We are asked by the Hon. Secretary, Miss Sue Martin, 17 Frankland Close, Croxley Green, to announce that the Club will be delighted to welcome new members, whether their interests are in the acting sphere or in the very important tasks back-stage.

Those interested will receive a welcome at the Club's weekly meeting at 7.30 p.m. each Thursday in the Guildhouse. Alternatively, the Hon. Secretary will be pleased to give any information regarding the Club if she is contacted at 17 Frankland Close.

### NOTE TO MEMBERS

It would be appreciated if outstanding subscriptions (2/-) for 1953/54 be sent to either the Chief Street Steward: Mrs. G. A. Wilkins, 22 Warwick Way, or the Secretary, Mr. T. Hoey, 9 Harvey Road.

## OF INTEREST

### LIGHTING ON THE GREEN

Officialdom at its best is to be found in the matter of non-connection of the light columns on the Green by the Eastern Electricity Board. The Council are even considering invoking the Electric Lighting (Clauses) Act, 1899. Very appropriate.

### CROXLEY GREEN ALLOTMENTS

It is pleasing to learn of the agreement reached between the Croxley Green Horticultural and Allotment Holders' Association and the Council, which confirms the Allotment Holders' Association as being the managers of all allotments in the area. This is certain to result in a substantial improvement in the appearance of these plots in general.

### SCOTS HILL IMPROVEMENTS

The scheme for the widening of Scots Hill is at last in its final discussion stages and there seems reasonable hope that work will commence before the end of the year. It is sincerely hoped that the final plans will cover the safety of children attending the new Rickmansworth Grammar School which, from a safety point of view, is likely to be troublesome in any event.

### RACECOURSE ON COMMON MOOR

A suggestion that Common Moor might be developed as a racecourse has been considered by the Council's Open Spaces Committee. We might suggest that if ever—repeat, if ever—such a project was agreed, the first race (suitably handicapped) might be between the opposing factions from Basing House, and that the prize to be a voucher encashable at any one of Croxley Green's new shops, if ever—repeat, if ever—such a project is ever agreed. An Independent judge could easily be found.

### TENANTS' GARDEN COMPETITION

The R.U.D.C. have decided not to hold a tenants' garden competition in 1954. Whilst it is doubtful whether such a competition materially improved the overall appearance, there is no doubt that certain tenants worked hard to produce a show worthy of note—and perhaps a prize.

### CYCLE SKID TRACK — MILL END

The Council, after lengthy discussion, have decided to spend £200 on this Cycle Skid Track. This decision is difficult to reconcile with Council policy in other directions.

### BUSES AGAIN

We hear that there is again some talk on buses—their routes, turning and capacities. The L.T.E. will perhaps enter into diplomatic relations with the public through the medium of their “ Fobbers-off in Chief ” and pass along some information.

---

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