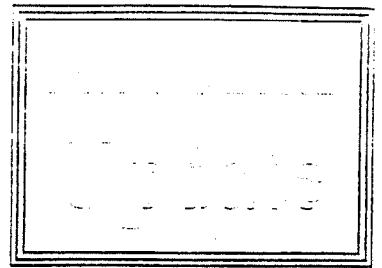


HIGHBURY NEWS

Newsletter no 1 July 28th 1997



Time to act to stop demolition of homes

The Arsenal wants to knock down homes and expand its capacity by nearly a third. Most people in the local community, even if they are fervent Gunners fans, don't want to see homes demolished to make the people who own the Arsenal even richer when they float the club on the Stock Exchange. We can stop our community being wrecked if we begin a campaign now. Already we have delayed Islington council agreement of a plan that foresaw tens of houses being demolished. The threat is still there, though, so we need to keep arguing.

We are in a powerful position now. There are council elections coming

up, and councillors know how strongly people feel about this. The most important thing to do right now is to write letters to the people who take the decisions. Say what you feel about the prospect of 30 per cent more people here on match days, and the demolition of the homes of more than a hundred people to expand the stadium. We have listed the key names and addresses on the other side of this newsletter.

If you want you can save time by writing one letter and copying it to others. Please, if you can, bring copies of any letters you write to the next meeting

Homes come first

Most local people, whether or not they are Arsenal supporters, feel that it is wrong for people to lose their homes to expand a football stadium.

Since Arsenal would demolish and rebuild the West Stand first if plans go ahead, the family homes and gardens along Highbury Hill (some private, some Housing Association-owned, some owned by the council) have been the first focus of concern. But the Club insists it must rebuild two stands or none.

Aubert Court and Drakeley Court at risk as two stands are rebuilt

South Stand expansion would involve demolition of homes in Drakeley Court, and overshadowing or demolition at Aubert Court as well.

So whatever type of home you live in, it is at risk from the plans for expansion of the stadium.

More fans mean traffic gridlock

Many Arsenal fans drive to matches from outside Highbury and Islington. So even now parking already extends over much of the borough on match days. With the inner no-parking zone expanding this season, the effect of parking will grow this year, before the number of people travelling to the stadium grows. Local tube stations are already at capacity at peak arrival and departure times.

Our neighbourhood can't cope with expansion

We are happy to share Highbury with the Club at its current size. But much has changed in football since we last had crowds of 50,000 here. Arsenal seeks massive expansion. Made up of a 30% larger crowd, a much larger stadium, and more events per week to pay for it, the club would dominate the area in a way that it does not at present.

Come along to our next meeting to find out what is going on

Our next big Meeting will be at the Aubert Court Community Centre, Avenell Road, **Monday 4th August 1997 at 7.30pm**. Please come if you are interested in what's happening. We'll launch the association, and plan activities. Other meetings The next two meetings of the Development Control Sub-Committee are on the 14th Aug and 11th Sept.

Huge protest greets councillors at Town Hall

Over 100 Highbury residents turned up and protested on the steps of the Town Hall. We lobbied our local councillors and told our local newspapers what we thought. In the meeting seven told councillors about what Arsenal's plans would mean for the people that live in the area. We said the Draft Planning Brief was biased in Arsenal's favour, and based on too little local consultation, and so should not be agreed.

New threat in September: compulsory purchase has not been ruled out

Councillors asked for a redrafted Brief to come back to the Committee in September. Both we and our local Councillor Richard Greening asked the Committee to rule out Compulsory Purchase of houses for the expansion, but they would not do so. The council-established group

ASAG, (The Arsenal Stadium Advisory Group) set up to contribute to the Draft Planning Brief, met again on July 21st. Arsenal has refused to comment or return phonecalls to discuss planning alternatives. Many local people, who have attended these meetings in good faith believe the group has been asked to approve a huge expansion of the stadium, without any real alternatives.

Does the club really bring in a lot of cash to the area?

Councillors assume that Arsenal is 'worth a fortune' to us all. But is it? Our survey in Highbury suggests that the main winners are the pubs (owned by breweries outside Islington); the mobile food-vans (who are mostly not locals). Local people do own the fish and chip shops and cafes. How much busier could they be on match days? **Takings are 25-40% down** Most other kinds of shop are 25-40% down on takings on match days because local shoppers go out of the area to shop. On the Council side, Arsenal pays its business rate to central Government, and only pays for policing inside the ground. We, the local ratepayers, pay for policing in the streets and for street-cleaning after matches. The Local Chamber of Commerce says that Arsenal does not increase trade overall for local businesses - and in fact does many of them harm.

Write to your councillors and MP

All the Council Members listed below can be written to at Islington Town Hall, Upper Street, London N1 2UD We have listed ward Councillors, and some other relevant Councillors, together with details of the key committees that they sit on. You can also visit your local Councillors in their surgeries. For details of times and places, telephone the Town Hall on 0171 226 1234

Local Councillors

Gillespie Ward
Jeanette Arnold: Member of the Development Control sub-Committee which will make the decision about Arsenal expansion.
Richard Greening: Member of both the Housing sub-Committee and the Transport sub-Committee.

Highbury Ward:
Milton Babulal: Member of the Environment Committee; Stewart Cross; Ansar Khan.

Quadrant Ward
Dave Barnes: Member of the

Housing sub-Committee; Clive Blackwood

Environment Committee:
Chair Andrew Bosi Also sits on the Development Control sub-Committee which will make the decision about Arsenal expansion; Vice-chair: Pat Haynes (also Deputy Mayor).

Transport sub-Committee
Chair: Michael Boye-Anawomah (also on The Environment Committee and Housing sub-Committee)

Housing Committee
Chair: Mark Stacey

Other Key Councillors
Council Leader Derek Sawyer; Deputy leader Phil Kelly

Our Local MP in N. Islington
Jeremy Corbyn House of Commons, SW1A 0AA tel 0171 219 6173. Mon-Thur 10.30am-12.30pm
On Fridays he holds surgeries in various parts of the borough. Phone the above number or Islington Town Hall for details.

Highbury's local people come together

Several hundred residents met in Aubert Court Community Centre on 9th July. We leafleted over 4,000 households in Highbury, explained what was going on, and encouraged people to come to a Town Hall meeting on 17th July (see story above).

We are looking for about 20 people - tenants and home owners - to be on the committee of the new Highbury association. Please contact Gill Shepherd on 354 2705 or Robert Scott on 359 5731 for more information, or come along to the meeting on August 4th at Aubert Court Community Centre at 7.30pm.