

# Hereford Heckler



The bulletin of Hereford Solidarity League  
Freedom • Equality • Community  
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**Coming soon to a High Town near you:** lots and lots of empty shops. Butchers! Bakers! Candlestick makers! Forget it, they've all closed down!

## COUNCIL TO WRECK CITY

**"We've got to avoid preservation,"** the words of Jonathan Bretherton, ESG Herefordshire chief executive, speaking to a recent public meeting about the plans for the Edgar Street Grid.

The meeting, organised by the Hereford Civic Society, was told how the city should become a tourist destination for day-trippers by encouraging top name retailers to set up shop here.

Among the plans are a hotel with banqueting facilities, a Waitrose food hall and more trendy wine bars. Who's going to be using those then? Not the people of Hereford.

Other plans include a new leisure quarter on the site of the cattle market, a civic quarter with new library as well as houses and new office space. There is no doubt that Hereford will benefit from these being so close to the existing city centre.

The major flaw in the plan is a new retail development outside the existing shopping core of High Town. With shops surely to be closing left, right and centre this will destroy the existing character of the town, which already has around 40 vacant shops.

Hereford's Buttermarket stallholders have recently formed an Independent Retailers Association (BIRA) after fears were raised that they would be ignored by Herefordshire Council when drawing up plans to redevelop



Jonathan Bretherton, ESG Herefordshire boss, laughing all the way to the bank

the indoor market. As it stands, the Buttermarket is likely to be severely affected by the ESG development.

"It is essential that the existing traders are protected during the regenerations works," Len Tawn, chairman of the BIRA, told the *Hereford Heckler*. The Independent Retailers Association now has 100% membership of stall holders within the market, but will the council listen to its traders ...?

ESG Herefordshire, in collaboration with London developers Stanhope, are also wheeling out the old chestnut of a new multi-screen cinema in their plans; so far, the only concrete idea they've had to appeal specifically

to young people. We have to be a bit cynical though. No one goes to the existing Odeon partly because it's old and uncomfortable but partly because everyone gets the latest films on TV now anyway. It's a populist idea they're using to sweeten a bitter pill of shops, trendy wine bars and, er, more shops. Oh, and a new multi-story car park that will replace the old one that's earmarked for demolition.

The solution to Hereford's apparently poor economy is to invite large corporations into the city where the majority of the money spent will be taken out by international shareholders. Yet more low paid menial jobs will be created. Big shiny department stores will dazzle us. This is an easy solution, but we should be looking at what Hereford has already got and how to work within those qualities.

In 1845 Hereford finally opened its canal after 68 years of work towards this goal. The canal was in operation for 17 years but was closed due to the railways taking its place as the dominant form of transport. Is Hereford about to repeat the same mistake, redeveloping an area based upon attracting retail tourists just before we stop travelling long distances to shop? Welcome to the Hereford Ghost Town.

Visit [www.buttermarketfriends.co.uk](http://www.buttermarketfriends.co.uk) for more info on their campaign

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## LABOUR SACKS 100

### HEREFORD WORKERS

■ One hundred jobs are to go as the government announces plans to close the tax office in Broad Street, despite a 4,000-name petition to keep it open.

■ Hereford Solidarity League members signed the petition too. But we have to ask, **what action will employees be taking next?** Indefinite strikes? Sabotage on the job? Right hooks to Gordon Brown's jaw? The fight's not over.

## WE NEED MORE HOUSES!

■ The High Court has given Herefordshire Council a bloody nose over their plans to build 300 homes at Bullinghope.

■ But it's hard to feel excited when Hereford is in desperate need of houses. Only recently the local press reported that three young mums were offered accommodation in Cardiff and Birmingham because of a housing shortage. Meanwhile the council wastes millions on a new road and the much-hated Edgar Street Grid development.

■ Hereford needs beautiful, well-designed housing that's dirt-cheap. Everybody that wants to live here should be able to, but **we need more homes!**

■ We wish mums Ginny, Zoe and Kelly well in their fight to get a place of their own. Keep kicking!

## THATCHER'S FUNERAL ARRANGEMENTS

■ What's all this about Margaret Thatcher getting a £3 million state funeral? Why bother, **no one's going to be mourning her death anyway.** Just push her body in the fire and scatter the ashes in pub urinals the length and breadth of Britain.



Hurry up, Maggie, we've got the champagne on ice

## CARNIVAL FOR FACT AND REALITY

■ Members of Hereford Solidarity League were among the hundreds of people who attended a noisy but colourful 'carnival against the arms trade' in Brighton in early June.

■ Over 600 people gathered with whistles, drums, banners

and flags, all dressed in red to symbolise the blood of the hundreds of thousands of people **killed by weapons made by Brighton based arms manufacturers EDO MBM.**

■ The day was a success and the full force of resistance to this murderous industry was demonstrated outside the EDO MBM factory. The local press reactions included typical responses: "It was a shame our children had to see such rowdy protestors," said one member of the public.

■ But lets get the facts straight—the arms trade profit from making weapons that kill civilians in bloody conflicts waged by greedy governments. This very company has supplied weapons to dictators and war criminals as diverse as Bush, Hitler, Pinochet, Franco and Blair. Our government subsidises this industry and also makes vast profits, a disgusting reality of capitalist greed.

■ The carnival was organised by the Smash EDO campaign, who were the subject of 'On the verge' film banned in Hereford in March (see *Hereford Heckler* #2).

## 'BAD BOSS' AWARD

■ 'Worst Boss of the Month' award this issue goes to farming firm **DG Whistance and Sons, Much Dewchurch.**

■ After underpaying one farm worker, Paul\*, for eight years they recently withheld his wages for a month without notice because of another mistake they had made.

■ Other employees have been bullied into resignation, sexually harassed and deliberately overcharged for farm accommodation. Now the union Unite are fighting with Paul for his job and eight years back pay. Good luck to them.

■ DG Whistance and Sons—remember that name—'Worst Boss of the Month' August 2008.

**Does your boss to deserve our unique award? Let us know at [kay.bulstreet@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:kay.bulstreet@hotmail.co.uk)**

## HEY BILL, SAVE SOME FOR US

■ Who ate all the pies? Well, it seems it was Leominster MP, Bill Wiggin. Between April and June this year **the porker claimed £1,200 of taxpayers' money in food expenses**—that's £100 a week! While politicians are telling us to 'tighten our belts' and not to waste food it seems this Tory toff can't stop himself from shovelling it back. It's one rule for them and another one for us!

\*Name has been changed

# THE HECKLER MASTERPLAN FOR THE CITY

Here at *Heckler* HQ we thought there's no point just moaning about how bad the council's plans are for the Edgar Street Grid, so we put together some plans of our own. And after many months in the boardroom employing top town planners and world-famous architects—or something like that—we can finally release just several of the visions for our city centre.

Hereford doesn't need to be turned into one big shopping centre to bring in day-shoppers from all over the region, it needs what *its people* need and we believe our ideas reflect that. Our plans are based on this need, not on their ability to make a successful business venture. Infact, we believe the drive for profit and the very existence of money itself is something

that not only creates inequality but maintains an economic system that gives us not what we want but what can make a quick buck for company bosses. Our plans are made on the assumption that money doesn't exist, that all things are given freely and are taken according to need. Utopian? Guilty, your honour.

### LEISURE FACILITIES

The main emphasis of town centres seems to be on shops and retail areas and the plans for the ESG development seem to follow this trend too. But one thing that Hereford (as well as many other cities) lacks is recreational spaces and other forms of leisure facilities.

A central sports and leisure centre in Hereford city centre would no doubt be of benefit for many people. It could encompass a second swimming pool, a gym, indoor courts, football pitches etc. Why not incorporate it with the new development of Hereford United's Edgar Street ground and make it a place for the community, putting it to good use all week round.

### HELEN SAYS

Hey, why not fit a device to exercise bikes and other gym equipment that stores the energy from pedalling and then uses it to power the electricity in those buildings.

### SHOPS

We think Hereford has enough shops already, but not enough of what we need and too much of what we don't. Our plans for trading would keep the focus on High Town and its surrounding streets. Hereford Solidarity League bulldozers would be firmly set on Marks & Spencer—it's a sight for sore eyes. Crash! In its place would go numerous little independent fashion shops, cobblers and tailors supplying the best quality shoes and clothing for the people of Hereford. We don't need 50 mobile phone shops, they can be integrated into other electrical stores. Estate agents and banks can go—nobody likes them anyway. In their place could come workshops of highly skilled workers like carpenters, potters, jewellers, draughtsmen and architects to make us, our homes and buildings look beautiful. We would keep the coffee shops, even creating more. Places where people can sit and chat are very important. Likewise are second-hand shops. As much as they may appear to be full of dusty old junk, the old phrase one man's junk is another man's treasure is always true. Above all, our city centre would be based on services that we actually need, not on the desires of big company bosses bringing their chain stores to our town to simply increase their profits.

### NEW HOUSES

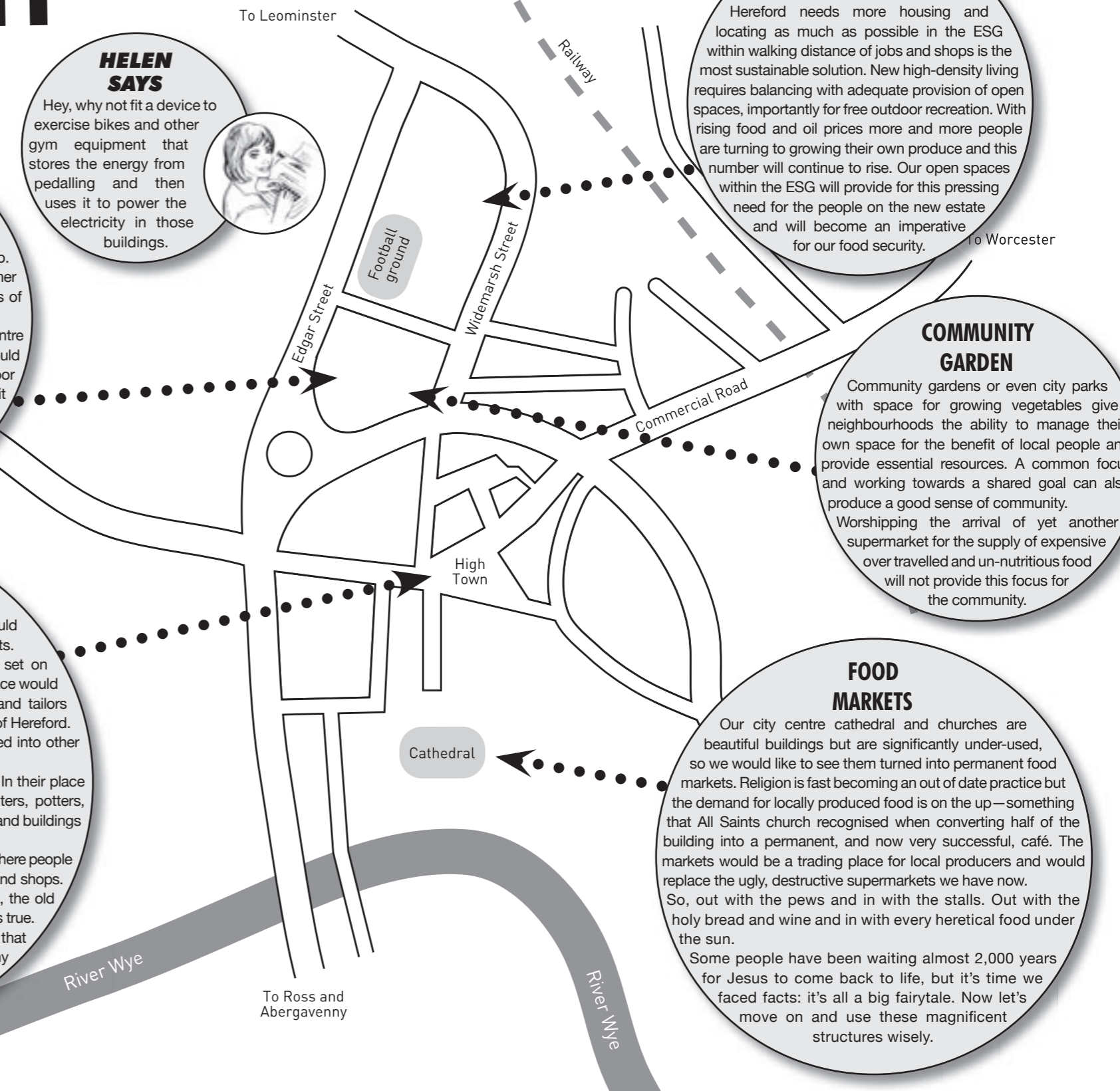
Hereford needs more housing and locating as much as possible in the ESG within walking distance of jobs and shops is the most sustainable solution. New high-density living requires balancing with adequate provision of open spaces, importantly for free outdoor recreation. With rising food and oil prices more and more people are turning to growing their own produce and this number will continue to rise. Our open spaces within the ESG will provide for this pressing need for the people on the new estate and will become an imperative for our food security.

### COMMUNITY GARDEN

Community gardens or even city parks with space for growing vegetables give neighbourhoods the ability to manage their own space for the benefit of local people and provide essential resources. A common focus and working towards a shared goal can also produce a good sense of community. Worshipping the arrival of yet another supermarket for the supply of expensive over travelled and un-nutritious food will not provide this focus for the community.

### FOOD MARKETS

Our city centre cathedral and churches are beautiful buildings but are significantly under-used, so we would like to see them turned into permanent food markets. Religion is fast becoming an out of date practice but the demand for locally produced food is on the up—something that All Saints church recognised when converting half of the building into a permanent, and now very successful, café. The markets would be a trading place for local producers and would replace the ugly, destructive supermarkets we have now. So, out with the pews and in with the stalls. Out with the holy bread and wine and in with every heretical food under the sun. Some people have been waiting almost 2,000 years for Jesus to come back to life, but it's time we faced facts: it's all a big fairytale. Now let's move on and use these magnificent structures wisely.



# Sport

## SEND THEM TO SEA

### Council refuses to reopen LEA pool

Herefordshire Council couldn't care less about sport and education if it tried. That was the decision made recently at a cabinet meeting when councillors voted against reopening the LEA pool because of 'insufficient funds'.

The meeting, which took place on 31st July, heard that £72,500 would be needed to reopen the pool. An additional £210,000 was also needed to provide non-urgent upgrades.

Bradbury Lines builders Wimpey UK Ltd have paid the council £182,000 towards local education provision, which is more than enough to cover the initial repair work. An unsecured further £100,000 is also expected from the second phase of the housing development.

Which basically amounts to this: Herefordshire Council will not gamble this £100,000 to spend on upgrading an important sporting resource for our schools. But they are quite happy to gamble *millions* on the building of the Rotherwas Access Road, which was to be paid for by selling land for 300 homes.

And also this: Herefordshire Council have given the people of this county yet more proof, after proposals earlier in the year to close almost 40 schools, that **they really don't give a monkeys about anything other than getting into bed with top company bosses.** You scratch my back ...

But hang on, why should they have to gamble any money at all: six council bosses are now being paid salaries of between £100,000 and £150,000



We've found a new home for council leader Roger Phillips

each. Cut from the top, not the bottom, and there's plenty of money; give 'em all the boot.

Under the national curriculum every child is expected to be able to swim 25 metres by the time they leave primary school, yet the council has now closed the only purpose built teaching pool in the county. School pupils are currently using the Halo Leisure Pool, presumably in between the times when the wave machine is turned on.

But remember, just because the council says the LEA pool is now closed, that doesn't mean that's how it's going to be. They only have the power to do such things because we sit back and let them do it. The power is with us, not them. **The pool stays open, or Roger Phillips goes to the crocodiles!**

## SPORT FOR THE WHOLE COMMUNITY

Whether or not you enjoy watching football, it is clear that no other form of entertainment in Hereford can draw the regular crowds of 2,500+ that Hereford United does.

Edgar Street football ground is in the heart of our city and is also part of the Edgar Street Grid (ESG) development. Thankfully this means that a long overdue refurbishment may soon take place.

The problem is Hereford United is currently in private hands. If the club were under community ownership those 2,500+ of us could have a direct influence on how our club will change within the ESG programme.

ESG Herefordshire's master plan aims to put big business, not the community, at the forefront of the grid redevelopment. This must not be allowed to happen to the football ground. Our football club will

still be here long after Graham Turner has gone. It will still be here long after Jonathan Bretherton has gone and all the shops in his short-sighted retail development have closed.

Whatever work is carried out on the Edgar Street Grid should be for the benefit of the local community as a whole. Maybe this could be achieved at the football ground by including other sports into the plans. This would bring more people into the club and make it more self-sustaining at a time when many football clubs are suffering huge financial problems.

The future of our football club could depend on the redevelopment of the ground but this must happen with the needs of supporters and the community coming before that of the bank accounts of big business.

## BASH THE FASH

### ANTI-FASCIST NEWS AND VIEWS

■ The BNP recently attempted to set up a stall in Lancaster, but things didn't go quite to plan. **They received plenty of abuse from passing shoppers and local stall holders,** also having two cans of fizzy pop emptied all over their hate-filled literature. They were surrounded by local anti-fascists, before the police arrived to escort the fascists out of the city.

■ A regional organiser of the loony neo-nazi British Peoples Party recently received a 16 year prison sentence. **Police found 40,000 indecent images of children on his computer** after a long investigation into child pornography. When they raided his flat they also found nail bombs, white supremacist literature and other assorted weaponry. He explained that he was preparing 'for a coming race war.' Scum!

■ An anti-fascist home improvement squad recently paid a visit to the house of a former BNP councillor and the host of the party's upcoming Red, White & Blue festival. His locks were super glued preventing him from leaving his premises, graffiti was sprayed and his BNP flag was confiscated. The Red, White and Blue festival is a gathering of BNP party faithful, where they plan the coming year's racist attacks and sing nazi drinking songs long into the night. **To find out more about the campaign against it, go to nobnppfestival.wordpress.com.**

## LIKE FATHER, LIKE SON

Max Mosley, Formula One chief and son of 1930s British fascist leader Oswald Mosley, has recently received £60,000 following a high court battle with the *News of the World*. Earlier this year Mosley took part in a sex orgy with five prostitutes, who according to reports at the time, were dressed in uniform and prison camp guard outfits. He then got in a strop when the paper printed the words 'nazi-style' in an article about the act. We're not ones to judge, but with parents like that you really do have to think about what you do.

Not happy with being handed damages to the tune of *three times* the average annual Herefordshire wage for one night and a few words in the paper, Mosley now says he will take legal action against other papers in relation with the incident ... whatever next?!

Hereford Solidarity League works to build a society based on the ideas of **freedom, equality and community.**

**Anti-fascism is an important part of our politics,** but we believe that all politicians, including those of fascist parties like the BNP, maintain a system of inequality, privilege and control that divides communities.

Real change does not happen at the ballot box and can only come about by **independent working class action;** that is, people looking out for each other and organising themselves to deal with the problems that they experience on a day to day basis.

Our aim is to increase the **fighting spirit** and self-confidence of working class people to change things for themselves. [kay.bulstreet@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:kay.bulstreet@hotmail.co.uk)

