

Hereford Heckler



The bulletin of Hereford Solidarity League
Freedom • Equality • Community
#8 • May 2009
Free/Donation



UNITED FROM PUTSON TO POZNAN

With the effects of the recession now being felt far and wide, and with people losing their jobs and homes, a misguided backlash has appeared against the local east European population.

This backlash is fuelled by people looking for a scapegoat for the social and economic problems we are faced with.

It is clear that we have big social problems in Herefordshire, but the blame doesn't lie with foreign workers and immigrants for the social and economic problems we are facing. The fault lies with the rich and powerful, the people who created this mess! Wealthy bankers and politicians are screwing us all over—they are the ones to blame. Bosses, bankers and politicians rip us all off no matter where we're from. It is because of this that we have to fight together!

Ordinary people have been fighting back

Continued on page 3

COUNCIL CUTS HOUSING TARGETS

Housing problems will get worse before they get better, council bosses have admitted, after revealing that targets to build affordable housing are to be slashed.

Herefordshire Council has said the plans to improve upon the 212 affordable homes built last year would be scrapped due to the current economic climate.

The council is currently at the mercy of private housebuilders, relying on them to provide 35% of new-builds as affordable housing. When they fail to meet their targets, so does the council. During this recession many housebuilders have put projects on hold meaning that at a time when there is a greater need for cheap housing, the availability is actually going down.

We revealed in our last issue how more than 5,000 people are currently on local housing waiting lists, with just 10–15 housing association properties becoming available a week.

Since the beginning of last year we have seen Herefordshire Council make plans to close 40 schools across the county, plus a day-care centre in Kington. The council has gone ahead with the closure of the LEA swimming pool, despite huge public feeling that it should be reopened and plans are also in the pipeline to withdraw funding from many rural bus services that provide a lifeline for villagers across Herefordshire. And now it is slashing its affordable housing targets over the next two years to 220 and 275 new homes in 2009 and 2010 respectively.

These certainly aren't unimportant local services that are being cut; we're not talking about the council not having the money to paint all the double-yellow lines it had planned to, or that there isn't enough money for an extra bin on the Castle Green for dog mess. In the case of housing, this is a basic human need and yet our council are prepared to invest £130 million on a bypass for Hereford

but nothing to help build new houses. Already, millions has been wasted on the much-hated Edgar Street Grid development, millions of pounds that could've been spent on the new homes that are so desperately needed.

Of all the council's plans to help county homeowners, the most significant has been to allocate £900,000 to help 15 households a year struggling with mortgage payments. Yes, only 15! Fifteen households! Thanks a lot, Roger. (What a joke!)

It's clear where the Tory council's priorities lie—not with people's actual needs but with some disgusting idea of 'development' to attract huge multinational companies to the city, whilst the rest of us are worrying about where we'll be living next month, as we queue to get in to the overcrowded Leisure Pool or wait for a bus that might never turn up.

Houses, or more shops? Clearly it's more shops we need. How could we be so naïve.

Find out your rights as a tenant by visiting www.adviceguide.org.uk



HELEN HECKLER

■ We were recently contacted by the local Labour Party, asking for our support in the European elections. They also asked us to speak at one of their meetings; apparently we're on the same side because Labour are also 'socialists'. We laughed for hours at that one. Don't tell me, Gordon Brown is really Karl Marx in disguise, yeah? ROFL! Anyway, we'd like to publicly state that **we in no way support the Labour Party**. They're just as bad as the rest of them!

■ **Three cheers for the group who smashed Sir Fred Goodwin's windows!** The ex-RBS boss got his car trashed too. The group responsible said: "We are angry that rich people are paying themselves a huge amount of money, and living in luxury, while ordinary people are made unemployed, destitute and homeless." Goodwin got what he deserved. Someone buy those guys a drink.

■ The partnership between glaziers and the Royal Bank of Scotland didn't end there either.

The bank got a thorough trashing from angry demonstrators in London on 1 April. Windows were smashed and office equipment was damaged—it's a small price to pay for their part in creating this global recession that is laying off millions of workers. The anger is completely appropriate. More drinks please, barman!

■ I see Lib Dem candidate **Sarah Carr has got her face in the paper again**. Not having the skill to jump on as many bandwagons as her rival Jesse Norman, she's resorting to wheeling out party leader Nick Clegg for photos. Take some sisterly advice, Sarah: save yourself the effort and just give up now. Jesse's got this one nailed.

*French kisses to my friends,
Glasgow kisses to my enemies*

Helen xx

'I'm a photographer ... not a terrorist'

In February 2009 the Counter Terrorism Act was passed making it a criminal offence to take a photograph of a police officer—you may have noticed pictures of the police in newspapers with blurred faces since this date.

The new act allows for the arrest and imprisonment of anyone whose pictures are "likely to be useful to a person committing or preparing an act of terrorism".

No one quite knows what the term "useful" means and how a picture of an individual officer could be used.

What it does do is limit the accountability and potential scrutiny of police conduct. On occasions when police have acted improperly, beyond the law, or made false accusations, independent journalist's photographs often prove useful evidence. Not any more! Journalists are concerned how this new law will be used against them when reporting events. On the first day of this new law, photographers gathered outside Scotland Yard police station to protest with the slogan 'I'm a photographer not a terrorist'.

World leaders throughout history have used misinformation and intimidation to install fear

into the public. The terrorist attacks and plots that have inspired these laws have not been properly publicly scrutinised. As such these overbearing new laws—seemingly a new one every week—are based on at best, un-transparent or, worst, false pretexts. They

have been put in place to limit accountability and to assert control over us all, to maintain the government's 'business as usual' approach even when the public disagrees. This country is sleep walking into a police state, where officers

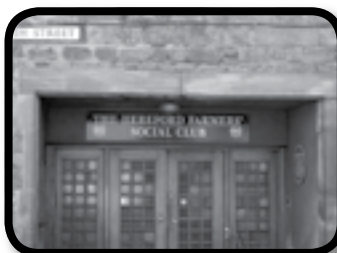
can use as much violence, intimidation and privacy invasion on any ordinary person as they like.

The group Fitwatch was established to monitor the work of the police's Forward Intelligence Team (FIT), which films and collects information to be stored on a database of those who strive for a more just and fair society (protesters). Fitwatch have started a competition encouraging people to take photographs of police officers, preferably doing entertaining things.

To find out more visit www.fitwatch.blogspot.com and watch a short film online at bllp.tv/file/1805964



SUPPORTERS OF FASCISM! Boycott Hereford Farmers' Club



It has come to our attention here at Heckler HQ that the Hereford Farmers' Club has been used to host meetings of the local fascist British National Party—a fact that the club are well aware of.

Facilitating fascism is something we

thought our readers may take a bit of a disliking to so we are asking all club members or regular patrons to boycott the club until they stop hosting BNP meetings.

Give them a call on 01432 272247 and let them know what you think.

TORY TOFF IS A RUBBISH GUY

Next time the bin lorry comes round, have a look to see if Jesse Norman's out there filling it with your rubbish.

The Tory candidate can't seem to stop himself donning a fluorescent jacket, picking up some litter and getting a photo in the papers. The guy's like a rubbish-magnet [insert joke here about associating with filth]. Is he really interested in keeping the city tidy? Or is he just trying to win a few more votes?

Jesse's clearly ready to be a politician, not a refuse collector. He's not actually interested in keeping the streets clean—after all, it's his party's Herefordshire Council that has let our county get in such a state in the first place; where's his criticism of them? He's just jumping on another bandwagon, getting his face in the paper to win more votes; a typical politician. Will the toff still be picking up chocolate wrappers and fag butts when he gets elected? No chance.

Now don't get us wrong, if your street's a tip, don't step over the rubbish and assume someone else will tidy it up, do it yourself—let's have a bit of pride in our areas. We have to live there, so let's make sure they're clean and tidy. But posh Tory vote-grabbers really aren't wanted. He'd be cleaning toilets with his finger nails if he thought it would get him elected.



One man that *is* doing his bit to keep Hereford tidy is former solicitor, Kip Waistell, who has taken the council to court over their failure to keep the city clean. Waistell's notices he served on the council, under the Environmental Protection Act 1990, were ignored

by local authority bosses. He is believed to be the first to challenge a council under this act and if they are found guilty they could be fined thousands of pounds for the neglect.

Will Kip get public support from Tory Jesse Norman in his fight against the Tory Herefordshire Council? Do pigs fly? Will the bankers sincerely apologise for the recession?

Citizen street cleaning teams are a great bit of direct action that really benefits local communities but let's not let them get hijacked by self-seeking individuals, pushing their own agenda.

Having said all of that, Jesse, the job of keeping our streets tidy is a lot more admirable and socially useful than working as a politician. If you were standing for election as a refuse collector you'd get our vote any day. Come to think of it though, you come and clean out my loft and I'll vote for you anyway. You can even pose for a photo if you want.

UNITED FROM PUTSON TO POZNAN

Continued from front page

to protect their jobs, protect their children's education, and to protect themselves from the current situation.

■ Workers in a Dundee packaging factory occupied their workplace for 51 days after being told their contracts were being terminated without redundancy pay.

■ Workers from car components firm Visteon have been involved in large-scale actions across the country, with occupations, solidarity pickets and demos happening in plants at Belfast, Basildon and Enfield. The workers have been taking action in response to the company's plans to 200 staff. Actions are continuing with workers vowing to carry on until their demands of a decent redundancy package are met!

■ Parents occupied two schools in Glasgow after they were earmarked for closure by the council, along with 25 others. Marches and vigils have been held in solidarity with the school occupations and the parents have received overwhelming support.

■ Occupations have also taken place at Lewisham Bridge Primary School in south London in protest at plans to close the



school. Visteon workers have also linked up with parents to help occupy the building. So don't fight people because they are from another country, or because they live in a different estate to you or are from the other side of the river! Fight alongside each other like the sacked Visteon workers or the Glasgow parents. Fight against the ones stealing your future. Stand against all politicians, the bosses and those in power. Together we are strong!

For a riotous read visit www.classwaruk.org

BASH THE FASH

ANTI-FASCIST NEWS AND VIEWS

■ **Two Hereford half-wits have been jailed for spraying a swastika** and racist 'National Front' graffiti on a home in Hinton. Brothers Christopher Walker of Green Street, Hereford and Mark Walker of River View, Ross-on-Wye, pleaded guilty to racially aggravated harassment. Their racist message referred to Pakistanis—but the pair are clearly short of a few brain cells as the house was rented by a Portuguese family. Doh! The only place they'll be getting to practise their writing skills will be cell walls for the next few months.

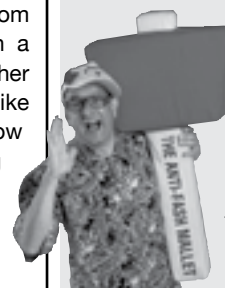
■ In February, anti-fascists gave both the organisers of the BNP's Red, White & Blue 'festival' **a taste of their own medicine**. The host of the festival, Alan Warner, had his gates padlocked and his house exterior redecorated. Meanwhile, David Shapcott of Burnley was also woken in the early hours to the sound of several personal alarms ringing around his house. Well David, at least you never got woken to the sound of nazi drinking songs or drunken yobs using your garden as a toilet!

■ The BNP have been busy in the run up to the European elections, and so have anti-fascists! Numerous **houses belonging to fascists in Leeds faced exterior redecoration**, after anti-fascists made a night of it.

■ It was a similar case a bit closer to home, in Gloucestershire, with numerous **fascist's vehicles being all glued up**. The owners were a bit stuck in the morning, literally!

■ On the same weekend, a small but committed group of anti-fascists came into close contact with a BNP stall in Cambridgeshire. **Hundreds of leaflets were confiscated** and removed from the area in seconds. The BNP were left empty handed, and forced to call it a day. What a shame!

■ Blood and Honour—the group that organised the gig—also **had their forums hacked ... again!** Usernames, passwords and private messages are now available to anti-fascists or any concerned locals and venue owners. It may be a good idea for the stupid nazis to find some better security methods, this is becoming a regular occurrence!



This month's 'Bash the fash' is brought to you in association with Timmy Mallett ;)

www.antifa.org.uk



JUSTICE FOR THE 96

Last month saw the 20th anniversary of the Hillsborough disaster where 96 football fans lost their lives. On 15 April 1989 Liverpool were due to play Nottingham Forest in the FA Cup. What happened that day lives on in the memory and I, like many people, can remember exactly where I was when the news of the tragedy came over the radio.

In the aftermath, a report by Lord Justice Taylor found that South Yorkshire Police were guilty of causing the disaster by opening an exit gate in order to reduce a crush at the turnstiles. The report then went on to say that the police had tried to blame the Liverpool supporters for what happened.

The inquest that followed proved to be even more controversial as coroner Dr Stefan Popper limited the inquest to the events leading up to 3.15pm. Relatives of victims demanded that the police response—or lack of one—be included in the inquest, but this never happened; it failed to analyse why they didn't allow the 40+ ambulances into the ground, for example. The inquest consequently returned the verdict of accidental death.

A private prosecution was then taken out against David Duckenfield, the chief superintendent on duty that day. During this trial the court was told that Duckenfield gave the order to open the exit gate, but then lied



Fans try to escape the crush behind the crowd barriers. Ninety-six people died.

.....
to the FA that supporters had forced it open. The case collapsed when Duckenfield was said to be too ill to take the stand. He took medical retirement on full pension.

The police have got away with it many times, the Battle of Orgreave, the Battle of the Beanfield, the murders of Blair Peach, Joy Gardener and Jean Charles De Menezes to name a few. But what happened at Hillsborough included such a massive loss of life that to not have a proper inquiry, and bring to justice those that caused this awful tragedy, would be a monumental crime.

For more information visit www.contrast.org/hillsborough/

HOMOPHOBIA TACKLED IN FOOTBALL

Football clubs and supporters associations from across Europe met in Barcelona in February for the Football Against Homophobia conference.

The event organised, by the European Gay and Lesbian Sport Federation, discussed issues facing gay and lesbian football fans and how they could be tackled.

The conference found that the discrimination happens first and foremost through ignoring homosexuality. It appears that the vast majority of associations and clubs choose to ignore homophobia as if it doesn't exist. The English FA is one of the few to buck this trend. Through working with the the Gay Football Supporters' Network the FA have started the Football For All programme.

For more information visit www.eglsf.info and www.gfsn.org.uk

A TAIL OF TWO KOREAS

Far be it for the Heckler to shy away from politics in sport, so a comment must be given to the South Korea v North Korea football match that took place this week.

While many people who live in the mental Stalinist hell that is North Korea face starvation, their loony leaders are spending millions on trying to get their national team to the world cup next year. Being drawn in the same group as the war-loving ultra-conservative South Korea was always going to be a bit spicy. It's fair to say that the idiots that run these two countries care less about their citizens than they do about winning, be it at war or football!

Unfortunately for the fans, the North's home game back in September was moved to China because they refused to have the South's flag or national anthem sung! Round one finished 1-1 but the North remained top of the group. And so this week to Seoul. The game finished 1-0 to the South after a late goal, but with the top two teams from each group qualifying it looks very likely that both will be in South Africa.

Some people say politics should stay out of sport but sometimes it does stir things up!

PLAY UP HEREFORD!

So Turner has given up the manager's job and is going to concentrate on running the club. Let's hope he gets on with some of the essential things that the club needs off the pitch. Such as getting rid of Lindley Catering and their utterly crap food, rebuilding the social club so fans have somewhere to call their own, and pushing on with rebuilding the ground without the muppets at the council and the ESG group getting in the way.

It would be great to see the club spend some of the cash it's made over the last few years on making Edgar Street somewhere to be proud of. Of the few people who do go to matches, most don't get in the ground till just before kick off, and why would you? The food is diabolical, the toilets are a disgrace and without a social club we have nowhere to meet



Graham Turner — on his way to the bank

.....
up and have a proper pint, and before anyone says "what about Legends", I've clearly said a "proper" pint!

Hereford
Heckler



NOW ON THE INTERNET!

herefordheckler.wordpress.com

INCLUDING ALL BACK ISSUES

