

# Highbury Fields Association



Affiliated to The Pedestrians' Association (Islington Branch)  
Member of Islington Stadium Campaign Alliance

## Newsletter - June 2001

### Chairman's Report

'Developments, dear boy, developments', as Harold Macmillan might have said. Although you will find in this newsletter articles on such things as two performance venues in Covent Garden and lighting, we find ourselves concentrating on all the building projects we are faced with.

Jeannie Burnett writes about the large P & O plans for Kings Cross. Somewhat closer to home we are still very concerned about the various developments that Arsenal are planning, both in Highbury and across the Holloway Road.

We wait to hear what changes they are proposing in their fresh set of planning applications due this month. We are certainly facing the prospect of many hundreds of new homes in Lough Road and in their present stadium but also new housing in Queensland Road. Will they have any positive and practicable ideas of how to prevent damage to the Fields as thousands of fans cross from Highbury Corner to Drayton Park?

We are surrounded by building sites with plans for yet more. Corsica Street has more than its fair share, with one in progress; another approved next door and news that the Channel Tunnel Rail Link construction is due to start on 2nd July 2001. Residents in that corner of the Fields would be well advised to attend the Public Meeting about the Vent shaft in Corsica Street on 25th June at Christ Church.

While on the subject of railways, we have only recently become aware of a new Planning Brief that has been

prepared for the redevelopment of Highbury & Islington Station. It was to have been presented to the Planning Committee in May 2001, but we managed to have it deferred till 19th June, so we do have some time to study it. There too there are plans for massive buildings, with London Mayor Ken Livingstone "keen on height", and many flats.

The rebuilding of the Baptist Church has led to hoardings blocking half of the top of Baalbec Road for months to come, with No Entry from the Fields. We have recommended to the Council that the space taken by the site cabins be reduced by putting them on stilts, or that the traffic be controlled by alternating lights.

In Highbury Grove a planning application is to go in for a redevelopment of Sarah Tankel House; a large block on the corner of Aberdeen Park, instead of which they propose to put a larger, 8-storey block of 45 flats, a clear case of over-development. Further up the road the Highbury Hotel has plans to convert back to five family houses; Highbury Roundhouse is under threat of redevelopment; one day, who knows, Robin's Garden may finally start work.

So much work being done, or planned to be done, all round the Fields. Yet, on the Fields themselves, so little work done during autumn, winter and now spring, to repair the damage inflicted last year by the circuses and by the weather.

*Martin Jones*

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### AGM

**On Monday July 9<sup>th</sup> 2001**  
**At Christ Church, Highbury Grove, London N5**  
**7.30 for 7.45pm**

**Guest Speaker: Alec Forshaw, Chief Conservation Officer of LBI.** To speak on Street Furniture: its Use and Abuse. Do come with your ideas. All are welcome; those who are not members can join at the door.

# Management Plan

*Many members have told us they share our concern over the present poor state of Highbury Fields. In our March Minutes we asked members to write with ideas on how the Fields should be managed in the future. We got a good response that Christine Mabey has edited and passed on to Greenspace. [Ed.]*

The Management Plan should cover all the items listed below; some suggestions are made as to their content.

**1. Warden or Ranger.** Important to the care of the Fields is having a 'dedicated' person whose responsibility it is on a daily basis to pick up maintenance and other issues which need attention and to whom users of the Fields could report problems.

**2. Grass.**

a) Probably the most important aspect is to ensure that there is a regular programme of re-seeding and re-turfing so that the green space is not eroded. As a first step an audit should be carried out establishing areas, in priority order, which need attention. Some areas, e.g. at the bottom of Highbury Place, by the path to the playground, can probably not be re-instated without being fenced off for a period.

b) A decision is also needed as to whether the 'informal' paths (across the main Field to Highbury Crescent and across the top Field backing on to Highbury Grove should be allowed to remain. Further, attention is needed to the frequency and length of the cutting. Currently there seems to be a policy of cutting the grass so short that fewer cuts are needed with the result that in some areas bald patches appear.

c) Leaf clearing also needs to be systematically carried out.

d) A clear policy should be established prohibiting vehicles (other than mowers) driving across the grass. Frequently litter is collected by two men driving a cart across the grass. This results in deep ruts; examples can be seen alongside the football pitch and Church Path under the horse chestnuts or in the middle Field opposite houses 41-42. When ruts or other damage does occur there should be swifter repair action.

**3. Fences.** If fences are to be retained (which most people consider desirable both for safety and aesthetic reasons) then they should be maintained. Again a survey of all fences should be undertaken and, given the high cost of wholesale replacement, priorities established. Further, rather than waiting to replace a whole fence individual repairs to

selected parts should be carried out: if this had happened around the playground – and it still could – we would not be about to see the whole fence steadily vandalised.

**4. Hedges.** There should be a review of where these are needed, a programme of planting and, then, regular pruning. For example, the one by Highbury Grove is becoming established but is very straggly in parts. More planting is needed at the back of Highbury Hill (to cover up the graffiti) and at the back of Baalbec Road (to obscure the entrances to the gardens of the houses).

**5. Trees.** An audit of what there are and a programme of pruning and new planting should be established. However, the trees planted should be planned with careful reference to their eventual size, lifespan and compatibility with adjacent trees whilst avoiding planting too many. If trees are damaged and can not be saved they should be rapidly replaced.

**6. Benches.** Some are damaged through vandalism or rotting; few have paving underneath but instead a muddy hole. A review of them and a priority action list is needed. Also there needs to be a standard bench selected: those benches which have rotted have been the Council's choice, but unfortunately proved to be of poor quality.

**7. Internal paths.** An audit of paths needing repair and a priority list for action should be undertaken. If one path were repaired each year the cost should not be prohibitive.



*Fig. 1: Ruts in damp area in lower Highbury Crescent.*

**8. Drains.** Although no doubt all the drains need renewal a survey would show that some are in a much worse state than others are; for example the two drains at the top of the central Field are water-logged even after four days without rain. At the very least the drainage grilles could be unblocked. Several other areas on the Fields stay wet for longer than could be explained merely by a high water table, possibly caused by leaks or springs.

9. **Buildings on the Fields.** The first step should be to survey these and establish whether they really need to be retained; the shacks at the top by Highbury Fields School, for example, take a lot of space and look dreadful. Similarly a decision is needed about the lavatories; if they are to be retained they should be repaired and opened for use. The former park-keeper's house takes a great deal of land and is no longer occupied by anyone with responsibility for the Fields. If it is to be retained then the Council should let it at an economic rent. (Similarly, when the 2 O'clock club's lease comes up for renewal this year, consideration should be given to the rental with any surplus income used to improve the facility). The bottle bank, given its extensive use, probably needs to be retained and is probably in the most acceptable place but maintenance of the area needs to be improved.
10. **Lighting.** The review of what is needed has already been carried out; what is now urgently required is for the new lighting to be installed and for the existing lights to work.
11. **Rubbish and Graffiti.** Standards on rubbish collection need to be maintained; the consensus is that this is managed well at present except that litter should be collected by someone walking over the Fields rather than driving a heavy vehicle. Dog dirt, however remains a problem. A review of the number, location and labelling of bins established for this purpose is needed; and they should be kept in good repair. Maintenance staff should remind dog walkers of their responsibility and a specialist contractor engaged (as previously) to remove dog dirt from the Fields twice a week and more frequently in summer. Graffiti is always a sign of an uncared-for environment and encourages other forms of vandalism. Ideally, what there is should be removed and a policy established that any new graffiti is removed within 48 hours. The notices erected by Greenspace about feeding the pigeons were, first, vandalised and have now been removed. If it is decided that this should be tackled again (most people think this desirable) what is needed is a more informative notice telling people of the diseases carried by the birds and problems created by uneaten food.
12. **Notices limiting use of certain Fields.** Some of the Fields have notices stating that dogs are not allowed in and that ball games are not permitted; these notices are almost universally ignored. All fenced Fields should be reviewed to establish if use is to be limited and then ensure that there is enforcement. It is almost certainly desirable to have one Field, at least, with restricted use so that young

children can play safely. The prohibition on dogs in all fenced Fields should remain. It would be helpful to the Rangers for notices of the Bye-Laws to be prominently displayed.

13. **Use of vehicles on the Fields.** A clear policy should be established prohibiting vehicles from driving on the grass. Similarly when vehicles are driven on the paths they need to observe the speed limit of 5 mph (more often ignored than observed) and drive carefully *on* the paths; the ruts and broken fence at the entrance to the Field opposite the upper lavatories demonstrate the point. All Glendale (or other maintenance) staff should wear a badge with their name and employer.



*Figs. 2 & 3: Chinese State Circus damaging the grass*

14. **Use of Fields by organisations.** Guidelines exist about how often the Fields should be let to commercial and other organisations, the rules which they are supposed to observe and the state in which they are required to leave the Fields. It has been suggested that matting should be used to prevent damage to the grass as heavy lorries arrive at and leave the Fields and that there should be a responsible Duty Officer on hand at all times. The rules may need reviewing and then should be strictly adhered to.

- 15. Playground.** The intensive use which this has and its value to so many Islington children who live in high density occupation without access to gardens means that this should be given a very high priority in any programme of maintenance.

### **Monitoring of the Plan and the Fields**

As important as establishing a plan, or a specification for ground maintenance, is ensuring that it is monitored regularly. The H.F.A., as the local group representing the area, would like to be involved in this. We suggest that quarterly meetings are established comprising the appropriate Greenspace officers, Glendale (or whoever wins the new contract) and other local bodies. The purpose of the meetings would be to review progress on implementation of the Plan and to report on local concerns and new ideas.

It would also help if this 'management' group could be consulted with ideas on such matters as choice of trees, replacement benches, lights etc. so that they are made to feel part of the planning process.

*Contributions from:* Bettina Reiber & Robin Hull; David & Jane Howell; John Turney; Antonia Cohen; Catherine Beaumont; Jane Thomas; Christine Mabey; Maryse Jones.

## **Operation Bullseye**

Hello again, I would like to take this opportunity to introduce you to a new local police system designed to keep you informed and involved in policing issues, which affect you locally.

Operation Bullseye is a computerised voice messaging system and is provided free of charge. Bullseye will send a spoken message from Islington Police Station to individuals or groups who have agreed to take part in the scheme, via telephone. It is hoped to improve the system in the near future by adding messages sent by fax and E-mail.

This system will allow us to direct the message either to particular individuals, or to a specific area or to everyone registered on the system. So, if you take part, you will receive only the right messages and information. We will send one message a week, unless something very urgent or serious happens in your area and we need witnesses urgently. Nobody has to take part in the scheme unless they want to do so.

The messages will include up to the minute crime prevention advice to enable you to take positive steps to reduce your chances of becoming a victim of crime. The message will be transmitted at a convenient time specified by you.

The Bullseye system must not be used as a way of reporting crime. You must still report all incidents of crime in the normal way, either through your local police station or, if it is an emergency, by phoning 999. The system is due to commence in the very near future. Full details and application forms can be obtained by contacting me at the various options listed at the foot of this article.

The initiative I mentioned last year about trying to improve the lighting in the Highbury Fields area is still ongoing and meetings have now been arranged with all parties to discuss lighting and other Crime Prevention by Design features to make the area safer and reduce crime. I hope that by next year, some of the features will be in place!

*Sue Haynes WPC 383NI  
Community Contact Officer, Highbury Ward  
Holloway Police Station, 284 Hornsey Road, N7 7QY  
020 7421 0645 E-mail: sue.haynes@met.police.uk*

## **Vent shaft news – imminent!**

In 1997 and 1998 there were a lot of meetings and a lot of concern expressed about the likely impact of the Channel Tunnel Rail Link to St Pancras. There was initial relief that it would pass through Highbury in tunnel and then renewed concern about the prospect of a huge vent shaft in Corsica Street. Then silence!

Now we hear that construction work starts on 2nd July 2001, and is due to finish in June 2004, though there will be further commissioning and fit-out of the shaft after that. **There will be a Public Meeting at 7.00 p.m. on Monday, 25th June 2001 at Christ Church when representatives from Rail Link Engineering [RLE] and from Union Railways will come to explain what is in prospect for us.**

**Note: There is a RLE Public Helpline, which is manned 24 hours a day: 0845 604 0246**

There is a new disposal strategy developing from the Corsica Street vent shaft construction. The original plan had been for all the spoil to be taken by lorry to the Kings Cross Railway Lands.

The 8 metre diameter tunnels are now to be driven from Stratford westwards and the spoil taken back to Stratford by rail. The spoil from the vent shaft itself will now be taken by lorry from Corsica Street to be deposited on the Stratford Lands.

Fortunately the earlier option of digging a smaller pilot tunnel from the shaft to Highbury Corner will not now



be necessary. That spoil would also have needed to be taken away by lorry.

The first part of the route will remain the same: north up Corsica Street and then to Highbury Corner via Calabria Road and Highbury Place. The HFA have pointed out that most of the houses in the lower part of Highbury Place have cellars that run out under the road and are in danger from the heavy lorries. However, the lorries are obliged to use only routes approved by the local authority. The main change in emphasis is the planned provision of alternative routes to dissipate lorry movements and allow lorries to avoid routes when they become congested due to accident and emergency. The prior agreement of alternative routes has been found valuable during the CTRL works in Kent.

The main routes would be either St Paul's Road or Holloway Road – Seven Sisters Road. In addition they are including Highbury Grove – Highbury Park – Blackstock Road – Rock Street to Seven Sisters Road. We have pointed out that Highbury Barn is seldom free of traffic.

It is still intended to use Baalbec Road – the upper part of Highbury Place – Calabria Road for larger roads that are unable safely to access the site via St Paul's Road. We have informed the responsible officers in the Council that Baalbec Road will be partially blocked for months



*Fig. 4: Proposed view of vent shaft from balcony of old Tram Shed (corners of Corsica Street and St Paul's Road)*

to come by the site hoardings (for the rebuilding of the Baptist Church complex) which cover half the width of the road. We have been informed however by RLE that this route has been reviewed by LBI Highways Dept. and by the contractor and found still to be the best option.

When the plans for the vent shaft were originally agreed, local residents fought hard to establish that the outside of the shaft (which is a large oval building: 36 metres long, 23 metres wide and 8 metres high) should be clad

in brick. This became one of the Conditions when Planning permission was granted. The contractors have now approached the Council asking them to rescind that Condition and allow them to clad it in smooth pre-cast concrete. Some local residents fear that this will be a magnet for graffiti artists should they gain access to the site.

Far more satisfactory are the landscape plans. They propose planting a large number of mature trees, shrubs and ground cover and will retain most of the existing trees.

*Martin Jones*

## Car sharing clubs

*This is a brief summary of an extensive look into this subject: should we start one for Highbury?*

A car club is a membership organisation offering short-term vehicle hire. They are complementary to public transport, walking and cycling. Joining a car club gives simple, cheap and efficient access to a variety of vehicles close to your home.

Members pay a one-off joining fee of about £25 and an annual subscription fee of about £100, then use the cars on a pay-as-you-go basis. Charges are a combination of hourly (£2-3) and mileage rates (10-20p per mile) Trips lasting more than a day or over 100 miles would normally be cheaper using a rental car which can be booked through the car club.

# A car is booked through a central office using the telephone or Internet

# Cars can be hired 24 hours a day for periods of as little as an hour at a time and at short notice

# Keys are kept at a nearby safe, or in the car and accessed using a smart card.

**Insurance:** Members sign a contract (only available to people with a fairly clean licence, who are over 21) to be covered for driving club cars.

**Benefits:** Pressure on parking spaces is eased; for each club vehicle, 3 to 5 fewer parking spaces are required. No more buying and selling cars; no servicing or maintenance and repairs. You can also save money: members of the Edinburgh club driving less than 8,000 miles per annum can save up to £1,500 a year.

**Reduced journeys:** Most trips are local journeys of under 5 miles. When you own a car the majority of your costs are fixed and petrol costs form a low percentage of your overall car costs. The temptation is to use the car

when you could take the bus or walk. But members of a car club have low overheads and pay the full cost of car use each time they use the car. In Switzerland, where 30,000 members share 1,400 vehicles, one club car replaces five privately owned cars. Closer to home, The Peabody Estate by the Barbican is setting up a club to solve the problem there of parking.

**What about one in Highbury? We need at least 15 people committed to setting one up.** If you are interested e-mail me at [k\\_s\\_hodgson@hotmail.com](mailto:k_s_hodgson@hotmail.com)

## On our doorstep ...

Well, only four stops away on the Underground! The new, one can hardly call it merely refurbished, Royal Opera House, Covent Garden is undoubtedly a larger and more formidable beast than our more immediately local Sadlers Wells: one has to count one's pennies – can I afford an interval drink, let alone the seat? But, hidden away within its depths, in the basement and in the attic, as it were, are two much smaller theatres well worth visiting and, at the moment, generally less well known: **The Linbury Theatre** and the **Clore Studio**.

Friends ask me: "But how do you know what's on in those theatres?" Indeed, in the most recent ROH Summer Season programme you have to turn right to the back, long after the 'real' programme, and even beyond the pages labelled 'Pre-performance Talks' and 'General Information' to pages 42-49!

But there you discover notice of twenty-five various programmes offered over the present four-month period, ranging from Monteverdi to Gilbert and Sullivan; from Ballet Rambert to performances by students from the Royal Ballet School. A positive feast for those of us jaded by the spectacles presented in the main house, and certainly within one's pocket – indeed, three of the performances I have attended were free! (The administrators of the Royal Opera House were themselves so surprised that the words are printed in bold capitals: FREE EVENT.) We felt positively guilty: "Surely we could pay something; is there no collection box at the door?"

But what about these new theatres themselves; and what about the shows you can see there? The Linbury Theatre is a small theatre in the basement, very much along the lines of the Cottesloe Theatre in the National Theatre complex. It has a steeply raked stalls area, a balcony of three rows of seats, and standing room along the sides. Comfortable, perfect audibility and sight lines; and a very spacious bar area before you enter the auditorium.

The Clore Studio is a dance studio for the working day: five long rows of simple banquettes raked enough to give a clear view over the very wide stage area. Naturally there is no proscenium arch and no raised stage; you can almost touch the performers, you can certainly see the sweat. And there is a marvellous sense of our participating – since many of the dancers have colleagues and friends in the audience, encouraging and delighting in their success. (And even we can recognise Sir Anthony Dowell and Monica Mason among them.)

And in the last few months what have I seen in these two new theatres? In the Linbury: among others, The Rambert Dance Company; the English Bach Festival Opera production of Purcell's elaborate masque 'The Fairy Queen' in costumes inspired by the the original designs of Inigo Jones – a fascinating mixture of singing, dancing, the spoken word and mime. A lunch-time concert was given by the young Gweneth-Ann Jeffers, something of a warm-up for her before she appears as the chosen representative for England in the forthcoming "Cardiff Singer of the World" competition

In the Clore Studio: an evening to celebrate Constant Lambert and his all-important contribution to the early days of English ballet; "First Class Air Male" – five extended solo dances by such as Akram Khan (recently at the Festival Hall) and Adam Cooper, himself! and "First Drafts" a generous evening of choreographic experiment and work in progress by members of the Royal Ballet. (And what a joy for them to try out something in front of a small but sympathetic audience). This latter under the auspices of the ROH Artists' Development Initiative, which is likely to be a significant force for the enrichment of the performer's professional lives.

You see, worth knowing about. (Don't forget to turn to pages 42-9 in you current ROH Summer Season Programme.) And practically on our doorstep!

*Paul Williams*

## Help – we need help!

For several years now the HFA has been managing (just) without a Secretary. We have a wonderful Membership Secretary, but we do need another willing pair of hands. Any volunteers out there?

# Mary Kleinman – 1928-2001

## *In Memoriam*

Mary died, quite unexpectedly, on 25<sup>th</sup> April. Her death came as a terrible shock, not only to her family with whom she was very close, but also to a host of people who had felt she was a very special friend.

She had been a faithful HFA committee member for ten years: always calm, kind, gentle and helpful. We were to learn at her moving and wonderful funeral service that we were only one of so many groups and individuals to whom she gave her time and love unsparingly.

## Traffic calming

### Suggestions for South Highbury

The HFA Committee members have been aware for many years of the problem of rat-running in the Highbury Fields area, allied with the danger of speeding vehicles. We are aware too of the difficulties of persuading the highway authorities to make changes. This is partly because of the need for each proposal to be carefully studied for its affects on neighbouring areas and because even the smallest change is expensive: the purse is small and they hold the key!

It is important therefore, that any proposal we should make has the merits of being relatively modest; obviously beneficial but without any unfortunate affects on others and not unduly expensive.

We made our first aim that of reducing the amount of traffic which enters Baalbec Road from Highbury Grove, crosses the Fields and travels fast down Highbury Crescent and makes its way via Fieldway Crescent, Horsell Road and Ronalds Road to Holloway Road.

We suggest there should be a raised pavement at the east end of Baalbec Road; a road hump in Highbury Crescent at the junction of Highbury Place; another hump in Highbury Crescent southwest of the junction with Ronalds Road; and a raised pavement in Highbury Crescent just north of the junction with Fieldway Crescent. Then, to make the rat-run less inviting we suggest that the exit from Ronalds Road to Holloway Road should be narrowed to one lane, and that Right turns into Holloway Road should be banned.

Because some fast traffic continues down Highbury Crescent past the entrances to the children's play-ground and swimming pool we suggest another road hump in that vicinity.

Secondly, we aim to remove the rat-run that enters Arvon Road from Drayton Park, shoots down Witherington Road and out again to Drayton Park via Horsell Road:



all just to save a few minutes in the traffic-light queue. The idea is to move the existing road blocks, now in Ronalds Road (a) down Arvon Road just south of Drayton Park School and (b) down Horsell Road just before the exit to Drayton Park.

Lastly we hope to slow down the speeding traffic at the top of Corsica Street by a road hump just south of the turning into Gallia Road.

We have had an initial meeting with two officials from Traffic Management and put our ideas into writing and await their answers. They will conduct a traffic study, do their sums and have a public consultation. We hope to persuade them to have the measures put in place as soon as possible.

*Martin Jones*

## Kings Cross – P & O buildings

### Room for improvement

Now that the Channel Tunnel Rail Link to St. Pancras is finally going to happen, there is even more focus on Kings Cross and all the development that is happening there.

As chair of the Conservation Advisory Committee, I can say that we have been hell-bent in backing up the Conservation officers and supportive councillors in their fight to stop the appalling development that P & O were proposing.

The whole area desperately needs regeneration – but not the 'slash and burn' they were intending. P & O have owned the huge site for 18 years and have done nothing to maintain it, so it is very run down and attracts all the horrors of drug dealing and prostitution. The new monolithic offices and hotel that they planned would do nothing to solve the problem. Re-use of the splendid individual buildings with Live/Work, retail and indeed office buildings, which would be self-policing (but on a

human scale) are what would transform the area and produce something akin to Clerkenwell, Shoreditch or Covent Garden.

The good news is that, thanks to a splendid team effort, planning permission was deferred. P & O were shattered but have had the food sense to appoint a new architect and are committed to a new master plan, which is very exciting and hopeful.

One must be aware that financial advisers are often the root of the problem and have destroyed many a good plan! They find it hard to evaluate a mixture of buildings rather than a huge new build. If they can be contained and surveyors with the right expertise are used, there is a real chance that they can achieve on this important site an exciting transformation at what will be a Gateway to London – something we can all be proud of.

This week I meet Sir Bob Reid, Chairman of the Kings Cross Partnership, who is horrified that the original plans did not get through. He needs to show some results for his organisation and was backing P & O to achieve this. We hope to help him to see what could be achieved on the site with imagination and vision.

*Jeannie Burnett*

## HIGHBURY FIELDS ASSOCIATION COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Martin Jones, *Chairman*  
Anita de Lotbiniere,  
*Membership Secretary*  
Maryse Jones, *Treasurer*  
David Boniface  
Jeannie Burnett  
Victoria Ellington  
Jean Engel  
Muriel Feder  
Bay Hodgson  
Kate Hodgson

Carrick James  
Ian Kelly  
Randal Keynes  
David Knight  
Liz Lydiate  
Robin Mabey  
Paul Magrath  
Tony Miller  
Jennifer Purchase  
Paul Williams  
Nicholas Witter  
Ginny Worsley

Nominations for new members (proposed and seconded by members of the HFA) should be made to Martin Jones (see above) by Friday 6<sup>th</sup> July. Appointments to the Committee will take place at the AGM on 9<sup>th</sup> July.

## A new lease on Life?

Even though Islington is still trying to include our local community centre in its great property sell-off, the Highbury Roundhouse is continuing to work on long-term plans to offer better and more varied services.

Members of the HFA are cordially invited to contribute their ideas and assist in the planning. Please let the Roundhouse know what suggestions you have for events or activities and approximately when they should take place. For instance, would you like to brush up your French or German during school hours or participate in a drawing class in the evening? The Roundhouse currently provides space for a small class in ballroom dancing on the odd Sunday afternoon. Would like to join? All it takes is a phone call or short letter or e-mail at the address or number shown below.

As most of us know, Islington has withdrawn support for many of the borough's voluntary organisations and it is actively selling off property that it considers unessential. **The Council recently gave the Roundhouse notice of termination of its tenancy** under Part II of the Landlord and Tenant Act 1954, effective at the end of October. Under the Act, the Roundhouse has the right to apply to the court for a new tenancy and expects to do so.

We are confident that we have a good case for retaining our present premises. However the situation is complex because, among other things, the premises and land are still registered in the name of the now defunct Greater London Council.

In August last year, Islington's hopes for getting permission to change the use of the Roundhouse's premises to allow for the sale of the property to a developer were rebuffed by a Planning Officer. He wrote: "In my view the Roundhouse building is perfectly suitable (for community premises) in design and location, and is well used. I do not encourage a residential application, as I foresee an in principal refusal."

Whatever twists and turns the legal path takes, the Roundhouse needs your support and encouragement.

*William Ellington*

Highbury Roundhouse, 71 Ronalds Road,  
London N5 1XB Tel.7359 5916  
e-mail: admin@highburyroundhouse.org.uk

*[If you feel the Roundhouse plays an irreplaceable role in our community, not least in keeping youth from mischief on our streets, please write to Councillor Bridget Fox at the Town Hall, with a copy to the Roundhouse. Ed.]*