

Kirklees

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER OF KIRKLEES ANTI POLL TAX FEDERATION & AFFILIATES.

ISSUE: 02/91. MAY 1991.
DONATIONS PLEASE !!



ANTI-POLL TAX NEWS

BAILIFF BUSTERS

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NO. 2

Towards the end of April 1991, Kirklees council began mass enforcements by way of distress, using council enforcement officers as 'bailiffs'.

From our contact with non-payers across Huddersfield, we have discovered many irregularities when the bailiffs visit non-payers houses.

One official who works in the poll tax office claims the anti poll tax union and the public have no right to question the council's "code of good practice" on bailiffs, as it is for internal use only. Kirklees officials are knowingly and wilfully breaching their own guidelines with no recriminations from senior officials, who will no doubt deny any knowledge of these practices, despite the guidelines recommending senior officers monitor cases by accompanying bailiffs on selected visits.

In one case where bailiffs visited the home of a non-payer, they did not identify themselves. Instead they claimed to have come to discuss not paying the poll tax. A child opened the door and promptly went to inform her mother of the visitor on the doorstep. After asking the owner to remove the dog they immediately began to lay claim to goods in the house. Not asking who the goods belonged to the two bailiffs, a small slim man called Mr P Clarke and a giant well built man who did not speak but was very intimidating and frightening, asked the owner to sign a 'walking possession' form. This allows bailiffs to re-enter the home at any time in future.

IT IS VERY IMPORTANT TO REMEMBER THE FOLLOWING POINTS AT ALL TIMES !!

- 1; Bailiffs have no legal right of entry to your home. Threats to call the police or threaten 90 days imprisonment are to frighten you.
- 2; They can enter through an open window or unlocked door. Ensure they are closed and locked if you are out or not going to answer.
- 3; If they do gain lawful entry DO NOT sign anything. It is not illegal to refuse to sign anything.
- 4; You may receive a letter which will

threaten a visit by bailiffs. Call the hot lines giving details to the helpline.

5; Bailiffs may not identify themselves as enforcement officers or bailiffs. They may say they have come to talk about not paying your poll tax. Only talk to them on the garden path. If you are worried tell them to leave, then seek advice and help from our hotlines.

6; If you can't afford to pay what they ask, do not agree just to get them away. Offer them only what you can afford, even if it is only 50p or £1 per week. Tell them you need to speak to your family and the anti poll tax federation first.

7; If bailiffs do not gain entry to your home, do not sign anything even on the doorstep. They will try many ways to force you to pay more than you can afford.

8; If they start to attack the anti poll tax federation don't listen to them. It is a trick to get you to allow them entry.

It is not the end of the world if they do gain entry and lay claim to goods. Call us we can give advice and put you in contact with solicitors. We will visit the poll tax office with you.

Remember you are not alone, 18.7 million are either in arrears or have not paid last years tax. The Government and council expect non payment to increase this year.

EMERGENCY HELPLINES

0484 512541

24 hrs a day 7 days a week

0484 538156

9 - 5 pm Mon - Fri

0484 542573

7 days a week

0924 848954

7 days a week

0924 468569

7 days a week

Imprisoned!

On Thursday May 9th in Grimsby Ingolfur Thorsteinson was imprisoned for 14 days by the town magistrates. Ingolfur is unemployed and married with a 4 yr old child. He is due for release on May 22nd.

Ingolfur is serving his sentence at Lincoln prison. Cards and letters of support can be sent to Ingolfur c/o HMP Lincoln, Greetwell Road, Lincoln. Protests to Tory leader Mr K C Brook on 0472 692898.

All aptu members must now oppose any attempt by Kirklees council to commit non payers to prison. Letters to all our councillors demanding they oppose any attempt to imprison any non payer from Kirklees, must be sent immediately.

May Day 1991 in Huddersfield was once again a poor and pitiful show of solidarity from the Labour and Trade Union leadership. About 100 people marched through the town. Apart from the last section of the demo which was made up of around 45 aptu, SWP and Militant members our leaders marched in total silence. Those at the rear all sang and chanted anti-Tory songs and anti-poll tax songs

At the rally in Mandela corner we heard speeches from MP Barry Sheerman, PPC's John Harmon and Eunice Durkin and a area TUC representative. The right wing of the Labour Party refused point blank to allow speakers from anti-poll tax unions, groups in a dispute or rank and file trade unionists.

When John Harmon began to

speaking a large section of the rally began calling for no poll tax bailiffs and for no imprisonments. Harmon stated those singing and chanting were doing the work of Tories.

We say 'It is Harmon and Sheerman who are doing the Tories work by cutting jobs, services and enforcing the poll tax on people who cannot afford to pay it.'

We demand the immediate halt of bailiffs, courts and deductions from benefit and wages.

We say to Harmon, 'if you really want to put people first, then listen to them. They are saying "stop the bailiffs". Are you real Mr Harmon? Or just a careerist out for a job in Parliament?

J. NELSON

The Kirklees anti poll tax news bulletin is a monthly publication compiled of articles from anti poll tax members across Kirklees along with trade unionists fighting the attacks on their working conditions and services and jobs. If you have an article which you would like printed send them to ; - Flat 2,8 Water St, Springwood, Huddersfield. Please keep articles to a maximum of 300 words and mark the envelope 'Bulletin'.

KIRKLEES ANTI POLL TAX FEDERATION MEETINGS:-
7.30pm every 2nd Tues.
Hudds. Polytechnic in the Great Hall Boardroom.

NEXT MEETING

28th May 1991.
11th June 1991
25th June 1991

Kirklees Anti Poll Tax Federation require a regular income to build for an amnesty and to fight enforcements against all non payers. We ask all readers and members to set up a Standing Order on a monthly basis with your bank to make a regular donation, however small. Please complete the form below and take to your bank.

STANDING ORDER FORM

To _____ (your bank)
Address _____
Please pay a monthly standing order starting on _____ (date)
for £ _____. Amount in words _____
from my account _____ (name)
Account number _____
Bank code _____
To pay to : Kirklees anti poll tax federation account.
At : Lloyds bank, 1 Westgate, Huddersfield, HD1 2DN.
Bank Code : 30-94-43
Account Number : 0583832.
Signed _____ Date _____

—» **ANTI POLL TAX SOCIAL** «—

Friday 31st May
at 8:30pm
LINDLEY WMC on
—» Brian St.
admission 50p
(free draw)

join in the fun
of a
—» DONKEY DERBY!!

The Campaign Goes On!

The poll tax is now in complete disarray with well over 80% of the population opposed to the most unpopular piece of legislation this century. 18.7 million cannot or will not pay their community charge; hundreds of previously unpoliticised individuals - housewives, students, the youth, even disaffected Tories - are weekly swelling the ranks of the non-payment army. This colossal concentration of power, under the aegis of the National Federation, is the most militant movement of civil disobedience in living memory.

"It's not that I won't pay. I just can't pay. I have honestly thought about killing myself over the worry" said Winnie Adams, a 70yr old widow from Glasgow. The misery and despair inflicted on ordinary people like Winnie and millions like her by this vicious tax has been incalculable. The indefatigable work of the anti poll tax fighters in mobilising the non-payment army has provided a beacon of hope against this blatant class tax. Their work has also shown to the working class, the victims of the poll tax, their own power when organised. We are now at a time in the campaign when the Tories have been compelled to administer the last rites to their hated tax, and to get rid of Thatcher to boot. The Anti Poll tax Unions pledge to relentlessly continue the struggle until the poll tax is where it belongs - in the grave forever.

The reaction to the poll tax of the Labour Party and Trade Unions leadership has been lamentable; a golden opportunity to rid ourselves of the Tory blight that has hovered above our society for 11 years has been criminally squandered. Rather than standing up to the Tories and advocating mass non payment they have instead occupied themselves with witch hunting the real socialists within the Labour Party. What a travesty!! Kinnock and Willis must NOW ally themselves with the unstoppable juggernaut of people power impelling society towards socialism. The National Federation set at nought those self interested Jeremiahs in the Labour Party who glibly urge waiting until Labour is in power. Ordinary people can wait no longer! We in the anti poll tax unions continue to stridently demand; the complete and immediate abolition of the community charge and its replacement with a fair rates system linked to pay. A complete and unconditional amnesty for all non-payers. The restoration of the £57 billion stolen by the Tories in rate support grants since 1979.

Let us pursue these demands without compromise and kick out the Tories and the corrupt system they foster, and usher in a new socialist future.
Z. POPOWYCH. OAKES APTU.

WE DEMAND-

- * **NO BENEFIT DEDUCTIONS**
- * **NO WAGE DEDUCTIONS**
- * **NO PROSECUTIONS**
- * **NO BAILIFFS**
- * **A GENERAL AMNESTY FOR ALL NON-PAYERS**

**YOUR VOICE
SHOULD BE HEARD**

Let's hear it!

TRAFFORD 2 FREE

On April 23rd Trafford magistrates court jailed Declan McGuire and Cornelis Harthoorn for non payment of the poll tax. Both received 14 days in Huddersfield Police HQ container unit. On Friday May 3rd at 7.20am they were both released after pressure and protests both in Trafford and in Huddersfield.

Anti poll tax activists in Huddersfield rose to the challenge with great co-ordination and to some extent apprehension, not having expected to see poll tax prisoners being held in Huddersfield or Dewsbury.

Without a second thought pickets were arranged for every evening outside the police station. Some days we held lunchtime pickets for those in employment. 14 pickets were held in total; over 350 people joined the protests to sing and demand their release. On the Saturday we held a demonstration of over 150 which marched around town and then on to a rally.

On the second day of the prisoners stay we held a lobby of the council and secured daily visits for them. Letters and cards of support were also kept flooding in. Over 500 were received by them during the 10 days.

Kirklees anti poll tax federation are confident that the council have got our message. No to commitals in Kirklees, or we promise the protests will be strong and widespread, they won't know where to turn!

J Nelson, Chair Kirklees APTF

Jobs & Services

As the Tories flounder for an alternative to the grossly unfair poll tax, the situation of housing workers goes from bad to worse. Tenants too are suffering, having to wait ages for their benefit, being worried by bills they can't even afford, and not being informed exactly how much they are being charged. Although this years council budget cuts have not directly affected housing, all local government workers should be prepared for action to stop cuts in any sector of local services. Without our compliance, the council cannot implement its cuts.

When the poll tax came in, in 1990, housing staff were expected to process poll tax benefit for people living in rented accomodation. At first workers refused to do this, and as a result were locked out from all council buildings. At the end of this 9 week dispute in August, in return for the protection of jobs, housing benefit workers agreed to start processing poll tax benefit for our claimants. However we have had no extra staff to help with the increased workload. Coupled with the rise in benefit claims due to the present recession, problems with the

computer system, this has created an enormous backlog of work, which will take months to solve.

In a desperate effort to get as much poll tax collected as possible, the council is sending out bills regardless of whether they are all correct. Hundreds of pensioners and unemployed people are receiving for the full amount a bill which should show a reduction. Housing benefit work is becoming more of a counselling service, as we try to calm these worried people. Labour are doing the Tories dirty work, they supply only electoral rhetoric in opposition to the poll tax. The poll tax was designed to cut services and put more services out to a private tender.

Fourteen million non payers brought down Mrs Thatcher, the dictator, and smashed the poll tax. Local government workers must realise the power they hold. The poll tax is not dead, yet. We are faced with more cuts, bailiffs and committals. Council workers unite to stop the cuts!

John Kipling, Housing Benefits worker.

BENEFIT DEDUCTIONS

I, like tens of thousands of other people in Kirklees, was summoned to court to appear before a sitting of magistrates at Huddersfield to answer to the 'crime' of not being able to pay my community charge. A liability order was subsequently granted by the court to Kirklees Metro Council.

This Liability Order enables the council to retrieve the outstanding money in any one of three three ways: Bailiffs can be employed to dispossess defaulters of goods up to the value of the amount owed - MISERABLE FAILURE; these licenced expropriators have only limited powers, and no right of entry. Wages and Income Support can be arrested to cover poll tax arrears - MISERABLE FAILURE; the cost of administering these deductions is prohibitive. Defaulters may be sent to jail - MISERABLE FAILURE; there are not enough prisons in the Western world to jail 18.5 Million people who have not paid their community charge,

As I am unemployed, our caring Labour Council, who claim they 'put people first' elected to apply to Social Security for £2 per week to be deducted from my Income Support, an amount that is already pitifully inadequate to live on - Social Security Advisory Committee Research paper No. 3, chapter 8, paragraph 3 states that "evidence of indebtedness and the need to resort to additional support confirms the view that benefit levels are inadequate. Similarly, managing on benefit involves the run down of domestic necessity and survival (sic) on less than a healthy diet".

I appealed against these deductions and eventually appeared before a Social Security Appeals Tribunal. During this kangaroo hearing I rapidly came to the conclusion that this putative 'independant' tribunal of worthies was no more than a thieves kitchen because of their truculent resistance to my evidence, which I believed to be strong - Kirklees Council had entered incorrect details on their application to deduct monies. This contrary to Community Charge Regulations. Needless to say, I lost my appeal although I certainly intend to ask for leave to appeal against the decision.

I urge anyone finding themselves in a similar position to appeal against any attempt by Kirklees Council to apply to Social Security for deductions from Income Support. Ring 0484 512541 for confidential advice on any aspect of the poll tax. They helped me a lot. Get involved with your local Anti Poll Tax Union. Don't allow the Tories to get away with blue murder. God protect us from a Tory victory at the forthcoming General Election!!!!

ZENYK POPOWICH, OAKES ANTI POLL TAX UNION.

For details on benefit and wage deductions or bailiffs and also for your local APTU write to; Flat 2, 3 Water Street, Springwood, Huddersfield.

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