

Highfields Anti Poll Tax Union News

Northampton Occupation

Northampton Council is one of the hardest line councils in the country when it comes to collecting the Tax. They recently decided to take Cyril Mundin who is 74 back to court to threaten him with prison after he'd turned the baillifs away.

A group of activists from Northampton, Nottingham and Leicester as well as People's marchers occupied the offices of the Borough Treasurer for 6 hours to demand that the summons against Cyril should be withdrawn. Mr Maskell the Treasurer stayed for about an hour, during which time there was some lively debate about how much he earned and whether he was able to sleep at night! Mr Maskell had little to say apparently!

After the occupation ended all the protesters were arrested and held overnight but an organised phone-in resulted in over 1,000 calls clogging the Police switchboard before they closed it down!

Initial threats that they would be charged with unlawful

imprisonment came to nothing, presumably the Police recognised that no-one would hold someone like Mr Maskell - you might not be able to get your hands clean afterwards! All the protesters were charged with Public Order offences to which they're pleading Not Guilty.

After they were released the protesters went to see Cyril who said he'd rather go to prison than pay his Poll Tax and was refusing to go to court. A warrant for his arrest was issued by the Court and they gave him 14 days to pay. He said from the dock "I shall not pay!" On 21st of October the News of the World revealed that they'd paid Cyril's Poll Tax - perhaps they'll pay everyone's!

Cyril's refusal to surrender and the occupation put real pressure on Northampton Council and the Tories. The News of the World came to their rescue but we believe that Northampton Council will think long and hard before threatening anyone else with prison!

St Peters Canvass

HAPTU is organising a canvass of the St Peters estate on Saturday 27th and Sunday 28th of October to build our membership in a stronghold of non-payment. If you are willing to help for even a short time on either day please get in touch. Don't worry if you've never canvassed before - we'll show you how it's done!

People's March

The People's March Against the Poll Tax came through Leicester on 6th October on a wet and windy day! Carrying the HAPTU banner we marched down Melton Rd, windblown but singing and chanting and getting a good response from the public.

About 200 came to the rally in Town Hall Square, including a group of South African workers in Britain touring a play about their struggle against Apartheid and the BTR company. There was also a delegation from Leicester City Council NALGO who had organised a social for the marchers the night before.

On their route the marchers have supported Court demonstrations and occupations - lending a welcome boost to local efforts.

City Council Lobby

The City Council Labour Group are meeting on Tuesday 30th October to consider the question of whether to use baillifs to collect the Poll Tax. The Anti Poll Tax Federation is organising a lobby of that meeting. We urge everyone to turn up at the New Walk centre at 6.00 p.m. on Tuesday 30th to let the Labour Group know that we are united in not paying and in opposing the use of baillifs.

Next HAPTU meeting
69 Chandos St
7.30 pm Thurs Nov 1st

National Demo

A coachload of protesters from Leicester including HAPTU members went to the national demonstration on October 20th to welcome the Peoples Marchers to London. The demonstration was up to 35,000 strong and clearly showed that our movement is alive and defiantly strong!

The Trafalgar Square Defendants Campaign organised a picket of Brixton prison where Poll Tax prisoners are being held and up to 4,000 turned up! It was the biggest prison picket since the jailing of Dockers shop stewards in 1972!

Despite having agreed in advance to a picket of 90 minutes the Police moved to disperse the protest after only 15 minutes and when people stood their ground the crowd was attacked. About 150 were arrested following 2 hours of clashes.

The actions of the Police show the Governments hatred of our movement and their need to stop our demonstrations - the Police immediately suggested that future protests should be banned. Our answer has to be to continue to organise and march and we must support all of those arrested opposing the Tax. The All Britain Federation is calling for a massive 1st anniversary protest in London next March. We should make sure that it is an overwhelming show of our strength whether it is banned or not!

Baillif Busters

Leicestershire Federation are putting the Baillif Busting squad on a serious footing by appointing a co-ordinator: Mick Shenton and organising a Day School.

We need to identify people who will be available during the day for pickets, lobbys, occupations etc. against the Baillifs. We have to organise telephone trees in our local areas.

If you want to join the Baillif Busters or can help in other ways get in touch with Mick Shenton on Leicester 531012.

HAPTU now has 6,000 leaflets explaining how to beat the baillifs and what peoples rights are. We need some help putting them out! Please get in touch - don't worry we won't give you too many!