



Newsletter

FOREST FIELDS INDEPENDENT RESIDENTS GROUP NOVEMBER 2001



Forest School.

There has been a long campaign to save Forest School from closure and whilst we failed to stop the closure there have been some gains that should benefit children in the area.

At the moment there is the possibility of a legal challenge to the way in which the City Council pushed this decision through but parents of Year Six children at the six primary schools involved are being asked to state their choice of school for next year when their children go up to Secondary education. Many parents are confused about the alternatives available and some, knowing Forest School is scheduled to close, are looking at a range of schools across the City.

If the Council gets its way, next September the CTC will no longer exist and it, and Forest will be replaced by a City Academy. Unlike the CTC, which selects all of its pupils on aptitude or ability, the City Academy will only be able to select 10%, or about 27 pupils each year. At the moment the City Council is saying that, apart from those pupils who are in the 10%, the places available to those living in the Forest catchment places will be limited to 140. They say that, on the figures available to them, this will mean that all of the children from that area, who want to, will be able to go to the new City Academy.

Those involved in the campaign do not believe that the City Council is necessarily correct but our advice to parents facing this choice for their children next September is-

If you want your child to be educated locally and you feel that his or her education will not be adversely affected by the emphasis the new Academy will place on Technology then you should elect now for him or her to go to the City Academy. Documents issued by the City Council will still be referring to the CTC but if Forest School does close next year then the CTC will be replaced by the new City Academy.

اگر آپ بچہ چاہتے ہیں کہ آپ کا بچہ نزدیکی سکول میں تعلیم حاصل کرے
تو ایکڑی میں ٹیکنالوجی پر زور دیتا ہے۔ اور یہ بھی مشورہ
کرتے ہیں کہ بچوں کا تعلیم پر بڑا اثر پڑے گا۔ تو آپ انکو سٹی
ایکڑی میں بھیجا جائے۔ نو پیگمنٹ میٹ کونسل کے میٹے پر
کامیابیت میں سے کسی کو بھیجا کر ہے۔ مگر اگلے سال فارم سٹی۔ کول بند
ہو جائے گا۔ تو تب سے ہی کسی کو نئے سٹی ایکڑی میں بھیجا جائے گا۔

For more information telephone

We've listened....but we haven't taken any notice!

And now for the topic we love to hate – the buses.. Not only has the Forest Fields service, now the 68, been cut back, but the service is even less reliable than before re-organisation. City Transport told us that by stopping the cross-city service that we used to have, buses through Forest Fields would be more reliable. Now they're even worse. And for those of us forced onto bus routes via Radford Road and Sherwood Rise thanks to the infrequency of the 68, over-crowding means that often several buses go past without even stopping. Passenger capacity has been reduced, by replacing double with single-deckers at the same time passenger demand has been increased. Nice one, City Transport.

The result? My journey time to West Bridgford has been increased from 35 minutes to anything up to an hour and a half. I even know of people being threatened with the sack, after repeatedly being unable to get to work on time. And you may have noticed that despite Radford Road being open to traffic in both directions, buses are still using Burford Road – so much for it being a temporary measure.

My guess is that the 68 will soon be withdrawn altogether, leaving Forest Fields without a bus service. With us being forced to use the Radford Road and Sherwood Rise services if we've got any chance of getting to where we need to be, I'm sure that City Transport will soon be talking about "lack of viability due to decreased passenger usage".

So, if cross-city routes weren't the reason for the chaos on the buses, what is? Maybe it's something to do with reduced services and bus drivers leaving in their droves. Not that you can blame them. Low pay coupled with abuse and even violence from irate passengers aren't exactly enticing job prospects.

So next time the bus doesn't turn up, don't have a go at the driver. And don't just moan with your mates (although I've done my fair share over the past few months). Try telling the people responsible for this mess – the managers at City Transport.

You can contact Nottingham City Transport in any of the following ways – phone 950 6070, or e-mail them at www.nctx.co.uk. Or if you're really keen, give them a personal visit at their travel centre at no.5 South Parade in the City Centre. After all, they like to listen.

Oh no. not the Forest again!

Just when you thought you could breathe a sigh of relief and enjoy a carefree swim at Noel Street followed by a leisurely walk across the Forest – think again. The Nottingham Local Plan, for which the consultation phase for the first draft has just closed, once again proposes a major leisure development on the Forest and the closure of Noel Street and Victoria Baths. No timescales are given, but the fact that the City Council is unable to bow down gracefully over their deeply unpopular proposals is self-evident. The Forest Fields Independent Residents Group has lodged an objection to the proposal in the Plan, along with a range of individuals and other organisations. In the meantime, the City Council is considering the hand-over of part of Noel Street's facilities to a local community group. Could it be a running down of Noel Street by the back door?

Forest Fields Independent Residents Group
The Group has existed for three years and has organised and been involved in campaigns against the closure of Noel Street Baths and Forest School and a range of other issues. If you care about the area join our activities.
We meet at 7.30pm at the Lion Inn on Moseley Street on the first Monday in the month. We appreciate that the venue is not acceptable to all and we expect to be meeting elsewhere in the New Year

Asylum seekers in Nottingham.

A small number of asylum seekers are now living in the Forest Fields area. Some of them have escaped places such as Iraq, Iran and Afghanistan, where abuses of human rights are commonplace. They need our support. Anyone interested in getting involved in supporting asylum seekers in Nottingham should contact Nottingham and Notts. Refugee Forum 67 Lower Parliament Street Nottingham NG1 3BB.

Here we reprint a leaflet out by the *Alpdogan Family Campaign*, a campaign group set up to fight the threatened deportation of a family from Turkish-Kurdistan who are living in Carrington.

'We want to stay in Nottingham'

– say Fidan and Tarik Alpdogan

Fidan (11) and Tarik (13) Alpdogan arrived in Nottingham in December 2000 with their parents, Mahmut and Zeynep, after they were refused asylum in Germany. They are currently living in Carrington. Because they have already applied for asylum in a 'safe' country the Government say they have no right to stay in the UK.

The Alpdogan family are Turkish Kurds, who left Turkey in fear of their lives. Both Mahmut and Zeynep had been arrested by the Turkish authorities, and Mahmut was badly beaten by the Turkish military a number of times. The Turkish military are involved in a conflict with the Kurdish nationalist PKK, and accused Mahmut of supporting them. Mahmut strongly denies any involvement with this organisation.

In their independent assessment, the London based *Medical Foundation for Victims of Torture* say that medical evidence supports Mahmut's claim to have been tortured. As a result of this abuse Mahmut has suffered from serious eye problems. His eyesight has been getting progressively worse, and he is under a consultant for treatment in Nottingham. A child psychologist has offered evidence that both children are suffering from post-traumatic stress as a result of their experiences.

Both children are pupils at Haywood Comprehensive School, and their campaign to stay in Nottingham is being supported by both staff and pupils at the school.

When the Alpdogan family left Turkey, they left behind their eldest son, Ali. He has now come to Nottingham to be with his parents and brother and sister. Until he arrived they had not seen him for four years. Ali is making his own claim for asylum, and Tarik and Fidan fear that again they will be separated.

The family need your support – urgently. Their solicitor has applied for Judicial Review. We need to persuade both the courts and the Home Office that compassion is called for. Community support for the family could be a vital part of their campaign to stay in the UK.

Please come and meet the family. Offer your support.

**Claremont Primary School
Claremont Road
Wednesday 7th November
7.30 pm**

Contact: *The Alpdogan Family Campaign* c/o 67 Lower Parliament St, Nottingham NG1 3BB.

The Sumac Centre

Independent Community and Social Centre for Forest Fields & Basford

Work at 245 Gladstone Street is progressing in leaps and bounds with the main reconstruction completed by NECTA (Nottingham Environmental Construction Training and Action), and our own volunteers and supporters from the local community taking their place. Formerly the Rainbow Centre, we have now adopted the name 'The Sumac Centre' after a shrub in the gardens.

The basement workspace for Veggies Catering Campaign is close to completion, with just a few touching up jobs left to do. We will soon finish the plumbing and electrical re-wiring in the club room and in the self-contained flats on the first floor.

Three of the four housing co-operative residents are now settling into their flats, working hard to fit out their kitchen and bathroom. By the end of the month it is hoped that all four residents will be occupying the flats, bringing a regular income to the project.

We have recently received confirmation of a grant from East Midlands Development Agency to fit double glazing in the club room, and to construct and equip the kitchen for the community café, which aims to open before Christmas.

We are also fitting a sliding partition wall to create dual-function space when required. Our license application for the Social Club will be sent off during the next month in anticipation of Health & Safety and fire risk inspections, prior to opening early in the New Year.

Work on a level entrance at 73 Beech Avenue, and on installing an accessible toilet, is also nearly complete.

The kind financial support and encouragement of the local neighbourhood has helped maintain our spirits, as well as the cash flow, during the long period of refurbishments, although the financial jigsaw is not yet complete, so many thanks for your generosity.

Some events are already booked into the new Centre and the community are eager to make use of the facilities and social space when we open up. In the meantime you are welcome to come and see for yourself how things are progressing – and maybe lend a hand with the final works!

The Sumac Centre is at 245 Gladstone Street, NG7 6HX
Phone: 0845 458 9595 (local rate)
Email: sumac@veggies.org.uk

Building our community for **ALL**

Diversity is what gives Forest Fields its vitality and interest. It is an area where different cultures and languages meet; and where people whose families have lived in or near the area for generations mix with people whose association with the area is more recent. But whilst we should celebrate what makes us different, what the *Independent Residents' Group* stands for is people getting together around what we have in common. For us, no one part of the community is more important than any other.

This is why we've concentrated on issues that affect us all. We've campaigned to preserve the Forest as an open space for **ALL**; to keep and improve local leisure facilities for **ALL**; to reduce the inconvenience caused by the tram to **ALL**; and to defend the idea of a local school for **ALL** local children.

We're not always successful, and not everyone in the area will agree with the positions we've taken. But in our campaigning we've tried to be open, organising meetings in which **ALL** local people can have a say. For the *Independent Residents' Group*, local democracy is about people in the area getting together to make a difference.

We recognise that different parts of our community sometimes have different needs, but we're also aware of how differences can be manipulated by people who are not interested in the good of **ALL**.

We're aware of the pressures that make people look inward, but for our group looking outward matters. We want a community where everyone can feel at home; where people are respected for what makes them different but who are ready to stand together when in counts. This is what makes a community.

If you want to get involved

If you're interested in getting involved in the *Forest Fields Independent Residents' Group* do please get in touch. We're a small but friendly group. We're politically independent. We meet once a month, on the first Monday of the month and as and when we need to. If there are things that you feel angry about or that just concern you, or if you just have some time spare give us a call.

To contact the Forest Fields Independent Residents Group telephone