

PENNILESS ?

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The City Council say they have no money to spare to back voluntary groups. This is just not true.

Last year they set aside £688,000 in the Leisure Services budget for Urban Aid schemes but because a lot of the schemes were turned down by the government they have only spent £191,000. Even allowing for the fact that the council would only have to pay a quarter (the government would pay the rest) over £100,000 was unspent.

But where did it go? Certainly not to the voluntary groups whose Urban Aid applications were turned down last year. Apparently it has "disappeared" into the council's "balances". Wake up, Councillor Swift, they've ripped off part of your Leisure Services budget which was meant for community projects. What are you going to do about it?

What about giving voluntary groups some of these "balances" since the Urban Aid budget has contributed over £100,000 to them. The council will have over £7½million in balances at the end of this financial year. Of this £6¾million is going to be used next year to keep the rates down leaving about £750,000.

Even a small part of this sum would go a long way to help keep voluntary groups on their feet.

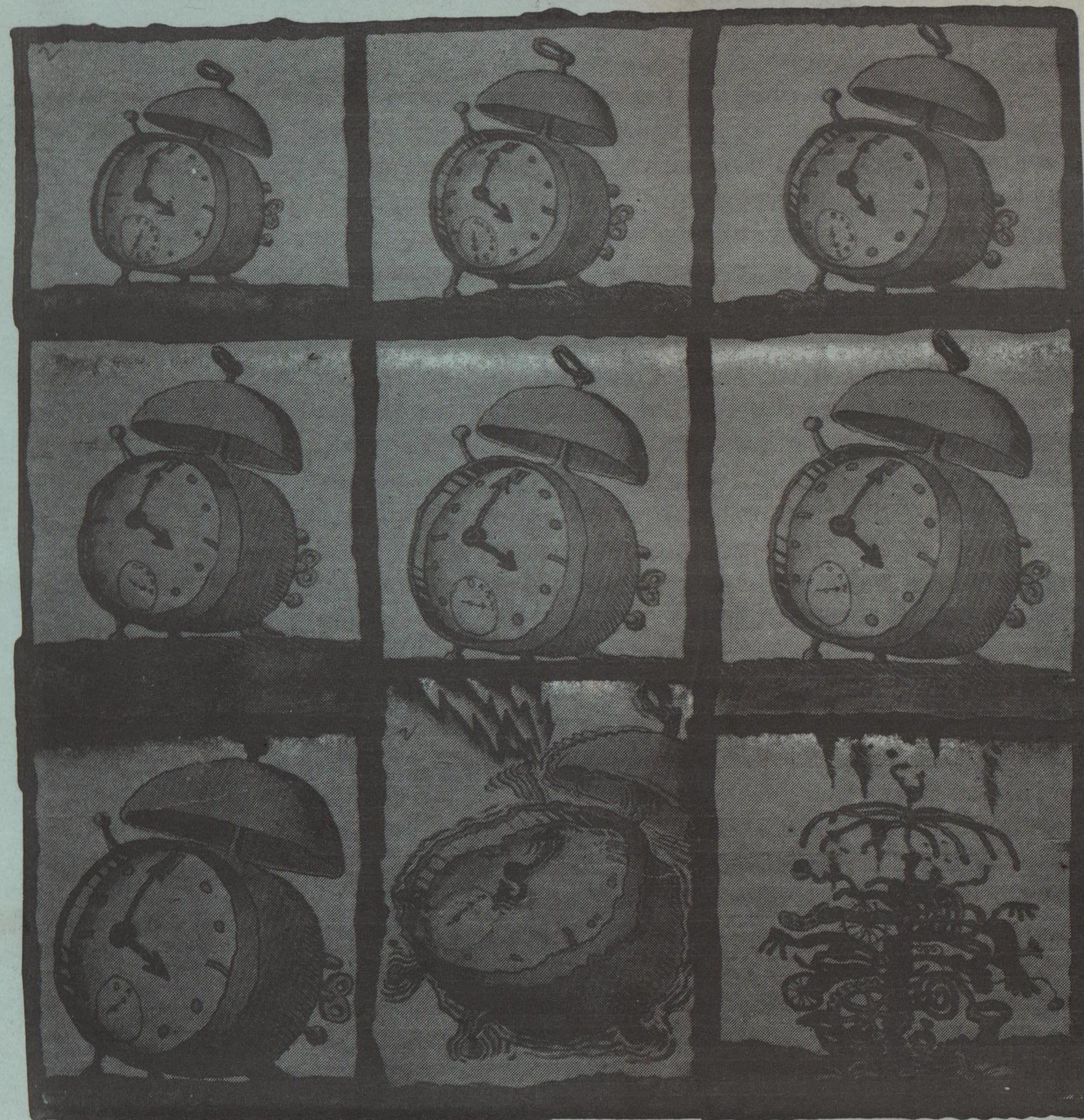
In addition the council has nearly £3million in "capital receipts" from selling council land and property. This has to be used to buy "capital assets" - i.e. land or property to be owned and used by the council - which could include development of adventure playground sites and community centres. But Finance Committee chairman Bill Bradbury says he would only spend the money on ventures which would "make a profit for the council" such as small industrial units.

At the moment the council is leaving this £3million in the bank to collect money interest while they refuse to invest it in voluntary groups who are trying to improve the standard of life for communities in Nottingham.

It profiteth no man, Councillor Bradbury, to gain the whole world if in the process he loses his soul.

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URBAN AID FIGHTBACK



WAKE UP
COUNCILLOR GREEN
YOU'VE GOT A

PUBLIC REACTION

. . . NOW READ ON

This booklet has been prepared by the Urban Aid Fightback Group which has been formed by a number of groups who have had applications for Urban Aid grants turned down by Nottingham City Council in Feb '77. It gives details of fifteen such groups and their applications.

Three quarters of Urban Aid money comes from the government and only a quarter from the local authority. Urban Aid is for the most deprived areas of towns and cities and amongst other things should "unlock community initiatives". The government asked local authorities to bear in mind "the contribution which voluntary organisations can make to the relief of urban deprivation".

So what did the City Council do? Did they decide to unlock community initiatives by backing applications from voluntary groups? No - they only backed schemes in which they had a stake.

Out of 33 applications, most from voluntary groups, only 10 were backed and six of these were for City Leisure Services to buy play equipment which they should buy out of their normal funds. Only four were for schemes submitted by local groups and all these were for conversion of City Council buildings to provide community facilities. Details of 15 out of the 23 applications turned down are included here. About a half of these concern adventure playgrounds.

There was also a section for holiday playschemes - 4 out of 6 were backed but the amounts allowed were cut drastically to only one or two hundred pounds.

Although local authorities were told to take special account of ethnic minorities, none of the schemes for minorities were backed. Even a one week camping holiday for 30 West Indian children was turned down.

All the applications were "discussed" at a secret sub-committee. Councillors showed no signs of having read the applications before turning them down.

Perhaps they thought they were saving money. But they would have had to pay only 25% - the rest would have been extra money coming in to Nottingham from the

GROUPS INCLUDED IN THIS BOOKLET

- 1 Radford East Association of Tenants and Residents - help with information centre
- 2 Edwards Lane and Longdale Estate Care Group - minibus for handicapped people
- 3 Nottingham Gingerbread - centre for one parent families
- 4 Nottingham People's Centre - prevention of fuel disconnections
- 5 St John's Church, Bulwell - community centre
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- 15 Notts and District Adventure Play Association - development workers

government.

They turned down all the adventure playground applications - a very short-sighted move because a failure to invest in the young will mean extra cost to the city in the future.

The same goes for all the voluntary applications. Voluntary groups put in hundreds of hours of unpaid work but there is a limit to what they can do without

financial backing. And most are working in poor communities which cannot provide funds - e.g. in the Raleigh Street area up to 60% of heads of households are not wage earners.

In spite of all this council leader Jack Green could not see why voluntary groups need full-time workers. He obviously hadn't read the well researched applications on which many groups had spent a long time.

As a protest we have sent all the applications to Peter Shore, Environment Minister, asking him to put his money where his mouth is - he has said he will help inner city areas. What we need is cash help or the prediction in the Times (8/2/77) that Nottingham will become the Glasgow of the midlands will rapidly become true.

OTHER GROUPS WITH URBAN AID APPLICATIONS TURNED DOWN

Islamic Centre (Nottingham) Ltd - cultural centre
International Community Centre - workshop for unemployed
Community Relations Council - multi-racial hostel
Community Relations Council - help for Indian centre
Notts West Indian Parents Assn - "operation get involved"
West Radford Action Group - help with advice centre
Family First Trust - family centre
Old Red Lion Centre, Bulwell - development worker
Strelley Tenants Association - summer playscheme
Pilgrim Youth - summer camp for West Indian children

URBAN AID APPLICATIONS WHICH WERE APPROVED

Sneinton Hermitage - community centre
Queens Walk, Meadows - community centre
Lower Broxtowe Estate - community point
Woodthorpe & Winchester Tenants Assn - community point
Castle museum - school activities area
Recreation Dept: Gawthorne Street - temporary play area
King Edward Park - playground equipment
Robert Shaw School - " "
University Park - " "
Victoria Embankment - " "
Family First Trust - summer playscheme
St Ann's Parents - " "
Edwards Lane APA - " "
Natural History Museum " "

Radford East Association of Tenants and Residents.

Radford East has a population of about 3,000 and is a proposed clearance area with some preserved housing. According to a recent Housing Department survey 74% of households are private rented and 43% have no income from employment. For those who are employed the most usual take-home wage is between £31 and £40 per week.

According to the 1971 Official Census only 19% of households have exclusive use of all amenities (city average is 72%), 77% lack an inside toilet, 72% lack a bath, and 38% lack hot water.

WHY URBAN AID?

REATAR has the use of a property rented from the City Council. They wish to establish an information centre run by volunteers until redevelopment ends in 1980 to help maintain and improve living conditions during redevelopment. The aim is to:

- 1) obtain reliable information on proposals for redevelopment or improvement, to inform all people in the area by public meetings and through the centre, and to inform the local council and its officials of the opinions of the people of Radford East.
- 2) ensure that essential repairs are carried out so that the area is not allowed to deteriorate.
- 3) to try and organise facilities to improve the general environment i.e. playschemes, youth club, play areas for children.

REATAR is only asking for £690 in total of which £225 is in the first year. The council's share in the first year would be less than £60.

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Edwards Lane and Longdale Estate Care Group.

The care group is run by a committee with help from an area project worker and runs various activities including a luncheon club, handicapped club, youth club, bingo, mothers and toddlers group and looks after the community centre.

The group has been running for five years, three years with the centre. The workers are voluntary giving up as much of their spare time as is possible. Funds are raised by jumble sales, private bookings for the centre, and £1,000 from the Social Services Department.

The group has bought its own transit van but this has proved virtually useless as senior citizens and handicapped people are unable to manage the high step. Adapting the existing van wouldn't be an economically sound proposition.

WHY URBAN AID?

Urban Aid would provide a purpose-built minibus for use by the physically handicapped, senior citizens, and eight mentally handicapped children in the area.

It would increase these people's mobility and allow them to utilise fully local facilities and become more integrated in the community.

The group already provides many facilities for a broad spectrum of local residents. The minibus would enable them to increase their scope and reach more effectively the more disadvantaged section of the community.

Nottingham Gingerbread.

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Gingerbread is an association for one parent families that gives practical help and support to all lone parents and their children.

At the present time we meet once a week at the International Community Centre on Monday evenings. We have guest speakers, film and slide shows, open meetings, social events and baby sitting. We are also able to give some advice on welfare rights, etc.

During the summer we have outings and holidays (organised by our National Gingerbread Holiday Company), walks and other outdoor events.

There are over 700,000 one parent families in the U.K. and an estimated 15,000 in the Nottingham area.

The Government Finer report said that adequate day care for children is vital if lone parents are to be given a genuine chance to achieve a standard of living above supplementary benefit level for their families. The report revealed over and over again the humiliations to which our antiquated and creaking system subjects lone parents.

WHY URBAN AID?

With an Urban Aid grant we could open our own Community Centre with an office, advice centre, a place where lone parents can escape the loneliness and isolation they face with a games room, lounge and childrens room. We need a play scheme during school holidays and day care for the many lone parents who work.

With Urban Aid we could employ a full-time counsellor and a clerical worker for the office. The rest would be done by volunteers from the group.

Our only income is from fund raising events and donations.

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Nottingham Peoples' Centre.

The People's Centre gives advice and help to people on a wide range of matters - principally welfare benefits, housing problems, and legal matters, but also civil liberties, homosexuality, and health matters including abortions.

It was formed three years ago by several groups who pooled their resources to provide a single place where people could come to for help.

There is one full-time worker paid by Karnival (Nottingham Students Charities Appeal) and several voluntary workers. They deal with about 5,000 enquiries per year.

The Centre is run by Shelter (campaign for the homeless), National Council for Civil Liberties, Claimants Union, Response (solicitors), Campaign for Homosexual Equality, Health Group, Off the Record (youth counselling), Nottingham Voice, People's Centre volunteers, and Karnival Kommittee.

WHY URBAN AID?

The project is for two people to work in the field of gas and electricity disconnections. The idea is to reduce the number of disconnections and reduce the loss of income to the fuel boards by maximising the use of benefits, grants, and rights; and providing an arena in which the consumers with difficulties can be heard. Every month about twenty people threatened with disconnection seek help from the People's Centre.

In three years four different applications for Urban Aid have all been turned down by either the City or County Council.

St. John's Church Bulwell.

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The whole of North Bulwell is a cultural and leisure wilderness. Apart from schools and pubs the existing church hall is the only public meeting place and all the social life of the community around depends on it. It is a forty year old asbestos and wood building vulnerable to vandalism and approaching the end of its useful life.

The hall is used six days a week and regular activities include: pre-school playgroup, luncheon clubs, OAP social club, scouts, cubs, brownies, pathfinders and explorers, a school of dancing, and old time dancing. The church provides all youth facilities free. Occasional use includes: public meetings, jumble sales, dancing examinations, badminton, occasional receptions, harvest suppers, and church fairs.

WHY URBAN AID?

The church has a site which can be used for a new purpose-built hall to provide a leisure and recreational facility for all, but with an eye to the needs of young and very young children growing up.

The project will be free of 'church' strings and has the support of the local Scout Council.

It will seek to counteract by social outreach what appears to be becoming an area with overwhelming pressures involving depression illness, marital stress, baby battering, petty delinquency, progressive emergence of gangs and crushing boredom in a true "cultural and leisure" wilderness.

The area served will include North Bulwell, Crabtree Farm, and Bulwell Hall Estate.

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New Radford Tenants Community Association

New Radford is an area of special social need. It has a high percentage of ethnic minorities - Cottesmore School has the largest number of Commonwealth children of any school in Nottingham.

A large number of members of the association still live in old and delapidated houses and in the flats complex there is a high percentage of OAPs.

In the catchment area there are no pubs, nine having been pulled down and not replaced. The nearest clubs (Variety Club, Salisbury Street and Ukrainian Club, Bentinck Road) are over half a mile outside the area.

The nearest community facilities are half a mile away and serve Old Radford and Lenton.

WHY URBAN AID?

A grant is needed to provide an entertainment centre where people will not be forced to buy beer or spirits as a place away from the boredom of flat dwelling for meeting friends, providing games, and improving relationships between all people, white or coloured.

At the moment the association has to work from a converted shop but what is needed is a real community centre in which they are able to help those who cannot help themselves.

Clifton Adventure Playground Association.

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WHY URBAN AID?

An area of land in Clifton has already been earmarked for an adventure playground and a fence erected at a cost of £6,000 (£2,000 from the City Leisure Services for materials and £4,000 from the Job Creation Programme for labour).

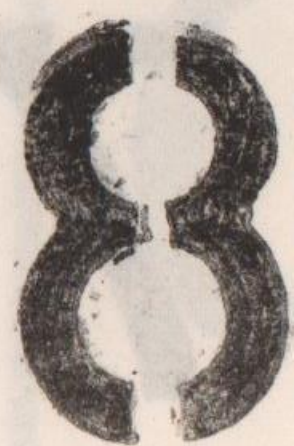
The land is now standing idle and needs a grant for facilities and play-leaders.

The scheme would benefit all children between 5 and 16 - about 1,500 per week, unemployed people, parents who will be able to use the playground as a meeting place, and ethnic minorities who will meet together with the white population - both children and parents.

There is a lack of play facilities in Clifton and the environment is of poor quality as regards play because of lack of suitable land.

The adventure playground will provide a social education, help to prevent delinquency and vandalism, and provide a communication point between the different age groups of children and adults.

The same application has been rejected three times.



Tennyson Street Adventure Playground Association.

The Association has been in existence for three years but only in the last six months has a small amount of money been made available by the council to develop their site. The association is run by a number of sub-committees of local people covering specific issues - e.g. finance, job creation programme, playground development - and is registered as a charity.

The Raleigh Street Area has been described as one of the worst in the country. There are no social amenities, unemployment is over 20% and there is a high proportion of immigrant and single parent families. The extent of multiple deprivation and social stress in the area is immediately apparent to anyone just driving by never mind living there.

WHY URBAN AID?

The success of the playground hinges on finding the money for playleaders. Local residents have an enormous amount of enthusiasm for the project but cannot raise the sort of money necessary. There are no other play facilities for the 1,000 children under the age of 15 who live in the area. It is vitally important that children in such a disadvantageous position should have these facilities.

The playground committees have with local voluntary help managed to secure a site, fence, and indoor play area. Urban Aid would enable the salaries of two playleaders to be met so that the playground can function properly.

The fully operational playground would act as a focal point, help integrate families into the community, improve the environment, and of course stimulate the local children's development through physical and emotional play.



Meadows Adventure Playground Association.

The association was formed in May 1976, although a pressure group had been active since 1974. The area covered by the voluntary association represents the Meadows Redevelopment Area. Some 4,500 houses are being cleared and replaced by 2,300 new houses and flats. There is also a community living in 1,100 houses which is to be retained (the Improvement Area).

The management committee of eight includes housewives, teachers, a probation officer, and a police officer. It has shown ample evidence of organisational ability and self help. This has included a survey of the area showing 70% of residents in favour of a playground, a highly successful unfinanced summer playscheme, concerts, jumble sales, and processions, and is currently engaged in a paper salvage scheme to raise cash.

WHY URBAN AID?

The committee would undertake to organise the building of a suitable boundary to the site plus mounding and screening on one side facing Queens Drive. The cost of this would be kept to an absolute minimum by the use of voluntary labour.

The playground would also require at a minimum two full-time playleaders to help supervise the children and organise working parties to construct the fixtures for the site.

It is hoped to utilise premises adjacent to the proposed site for indoor activities when the present occupiers move out (possibly '78-'79).



Top Valley Community Council.

The adventure playground would be run by Top Valley Community Council - a group of local volunteers presently involved with the project. This group has been established since 1973 and has undertaken several projects e.g. disco, evening club, and youth club. These amenities have been limited to one evening a week by the conditions imposed on the use of their building and by no means reflects the needs of the estimated youth population of 6,000 to 7,000 out of a total population of 30,000 in the catchment area of Top Valley, Rise Park, and Bestwood Park. In this area community facilities are virtually non-existent. Only 100 children can be catered for at present and many more have to be turned away.

WHY URBAN AID?

An adventure playground is needed to give youngsters a better social understanding, and build up a community spirit between each other, by means of working as well as playing together, having something constructive to do, under adult supervision.

As well as a fence and a building it will be necessary to employ two full-time youth leaders. The council will not expect Urban Aid to provide all the finance. Much of the equipment will be made and erected by children with adult supervision. Also it is intended to bring in tradesmen and labourers from Community Service, and the job creation programme will be used if possible. And the community council will continue its own fund raising efforts.

Provision for handicapped children is especially relevant because a hostel is to be built nearby.

Edwards Lane Adventure Playground Association.

A voluntary association was formed in April '75 and consists of local residents with two county councillors and a project worker on a co-opted basis.

The playground has been running since Easter 1976 and the committee are currently arranging with the probation department to have a community service offender to work for 120 hours. Also two people from the playground are to be trained for operating the Social Services long boat to give children the opportunity of a holiday they would not normally get.

The Edwards Lane area has a truancy record of approximately 10% and there is a high proportion of teenagers.

Although membership is limited at present the association has raised around £900.

WHY URBAN AID?

A previous Urban Aid grant has been used to build the playground. There is £5,700 available from April 1977 for the salaries of two playleaders currently employed and £825 for running costs.

The present building on the site is useless for many activities and would require many fixtures including heating and lighting to make it operational.

The association has applied for around £4,500 for extensions to their building including heating installation, provision of an activity area, storage space and a meeting room. Running costs and transport have also been applied for totalling nearly £3,000.

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Coalville Street Playplot Group.

A local group in the Arboretum area has opened a playplot but cannot meet the needs of local children without a full-time playleader

Gardens in the area are very small or non-existent and children must play in the street.

The Arboretum area is a Housing Action Area. Children under 15 form 33% of the population.

WHY URBAN AID?

The project is to provide a full-time playleader on the existing playplot. The playleader would build more major structures, involving local children and parents in constructive work, and arrange outings and special holiday projects.

The group can provide a van for collecting materials and for local trips with small groups which have already been organised very successfully.

The project will benefit children under 15 (534 in the area), unemployed school leavers, parents, and ethnic minorities, and will help foster a community spirit.

Balloon Wood Adventure Playground Association.

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According to the 1971 Census, Balloon Wood had 20% of its population under 5 (2½ times the city average) and 33% under 15. These figures are five years old and there is now an abnormally large number of school age children with no exceptional, or even adequate, facilities for the community.

There is a high proportion of single parent families. In 1971 the proportion of immigrant families was double the city average and 8.4% of the male population were unemployed and seeking work.

Recently a new estate with a population around 1,000 has been added with a similar age structure and unemployment problems but there have been no new community facilities to cater for these developments.

There is an existing adventure playground built with Urban Aid money and run by a voluntary management committee with full time playleaders, but two assistants financed by the Community Industry Programme will probably not continue to get this support.

WHY URBAN AID?

The association is trying to establish a community point on the playground by developing the existing building to cater for a wide variety of community needs including those of adults and disabled adults and children. Additional lighting and a paved way to the playground are necessary to maximise the use made of the facilities by both children and adults. And the association wishes to continue the employment of the two assistants who have proved particularly useful in involving the local community in beginning a mothers and toddlers group and similar projects. The extra is justifiable because of the lack of community facilities and the tremendous enthusiasm and initiative shown so far.

Broxtowe Adventure Playground Association.

Broxtowe was shown to be the ninth worst area in Nottinghamshire in the recent deprivation study.

There are many large families on the estate because of the concentration of 4 and 5 bedroomed houses. This means that many parents do not have time to get involved in anything outside the home.

Although there are about 1,750 children there is no school on the estate and an almost total lack of community facilities.

Unemployment is much higher than average.

There is an adventure playground currently being constructed and two playleaders have been appointed. A recent job creation scheme has provided the shell of a building and work on a roof is proceeding with voluntary help from adults assisted by children.

A summer playscheme was organised last year and about 300 children are using the playground at present.

WHY URBAN AID?

1) There is no lighting on the playground or the drive which is very dark. Dossers have used the playground on some occasions. Because of the dark the playground has to be closed at night in the winter and children have been playing on the streets. If a grant could be obtained for lights the playground could be used to its full capacity.

2) Urban Aid could provide a second-hand minibus for collecting materials and taking children on trips e.g. to the country, farms, or camping.

3) The playleaders need an increase in wages.

Nottingham and District Adventure Playground Association.

Play is slowly becoming recognised as a very important part of a child's development. There are four adventure playgrounds in Nottingham and one in Netherfield, and several more planned.

This is just one aspect of play provision. Other aspects include holiday playschemes, play streets, and also play for physically and mentally handicapped children.

The Notts & District APA is a voluntary association which is at present limited in its capabilities by lack of finance and the time and effort that can be obtained from its associated members.

WHY URBAN AID?

A grant is needed for two development workers and a secretary to coordinate all information and resources between all parties i.e. voluntary groups and local authority departments connected with children's play.

The project will aim to:

- 1) provide a centre for advice, information, and resources - Nottingham Council for Voluntary Service has agreed to provide accommodation.
- 2) expand the understanding and importance of play by exploring other aspects of play i.e. playschemes, playstreets, children's theatres, and play for physically and mentally handicapped children.
- 3) provide training at both worker and management levels.
- 4) create professional back-up support.
- 5) avoid the duplication in acquiring materials for children's play.