

The DEVONPORT COLUMN



www.devonportcolumn.org.uk

Wielding the Mighty Sword of Truth

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PRICE?

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LOCAL ELECTION SPECIAL See Inside!

Chief Executive of Plymouth City Council attempts 'censorship' of local Plymouth people's free press and websites – and he's backed by your money!

The Editor writes:

The Column was surprised and VERY interested to be told that the Chief Executive of Plymouth City Council, Mr Barry Keel, had apparently attempted to put 'pressure' on a Councillor hoping to 'gag' both The Devonport Column and the excellent Seaton Pool website. What would cause this public servant to do such a thing, we wondered? A common purpose, decided behind closed doors, under Chatham House Rules, at public expense perhaps?

Just so that you taxpayers know who we are talking about, Mr Keel is an ordinary civil servant paid some £150,000 per year to act as executive manager for Plymouth City Council. A fat cat salary, bearing in mind that the average salary in Plymouth

is about £15,000 per year. Supposedly, Mr Barry Keel is worth 10 local people. Well we don't think so, and we'll tell you why.

Both The Devonport Column and Seaton Pool website are alerting the wider public to a whole range of suspect circumstances. Dodgy deals, failures of the council to account for vast sums of public money (Devonport Regeneration Community Partnership and Single Regeneration Budget £millions, for example), highlighting why £100,000 of Plymouth people's public money is wasted on Common Purpose, PCC control freakery, secret closed door meetings, lies and half truths over the pool, bullying and corruption. All this has been recently exposed by their own brave councillors,

now so disgusted at the Labour administration they are defecting to other parties.

But far from investigating all this, Mr Keel seems to think that he has the power to put the pressure on those attempting to expose this rotten borough New Labour Council. No doubt he will just be following instructions from 'leaders' with a common purpose. But his censorship tactics won't work with The Column nor Devonport nor North Prospect people nor Seaton Pool supporters. The truth about the rot in Plymouth is coming out, and you can be sure of that, Mr Chief Executive. The slow-burning fuse has been lit.

New Labour gnomes attack brave Labour defector

Our Political Correspondent

Poll Tax reports:

The Column would like to express its support for and best wishes to Cllr Bernard Brotherton, who recently had the courage and honesty to resign from New Labour and join the Lib Dems in Plymouth. We know that it takes guts to do that, and Cllr Brotherton gets our vote for his bravery.

Why did he jump ship? In an interview with The Herald Cllr Brotherton said that the Plymouth City Council New Labour team were arrogant and into 'control-freakery'. He also said that he could not ignore the damage that the Labour Government and the Labour City Council are doing to the City. Doesn't this sound similar to the reasons Cllr Lee Finn gave a little while ago. He too left the dodgy Labour group run by Common Purpose 'leader' Tudor Evans.

Well, The Column understands what these good men are talking about and so do the people of Devonport. The unique and historic Devonport Community has been trashed by the social engineering of this rotten New Labour City Council.



*Cllr Bernard Brotherton
who was lambasted by his
former Labour colleagues
for obeying his conscience*

Of course, Cllr Tudor Evans attacked Cllr Brotherton for his decision. He pointed out Cllr Brotherton's 47 per cent attendance record. Cllr Nicky Wildy also emerged from the swamp to jump on board this bandwagon and attack the doughty councillor.

The Devonport Column says *what hypocrisy* by these New Labour gnomes. Whilst Cllr Brotherton has a full time job helping adults with behaviour and learning difficulties, and gives his time to Plymouth as a councillor, Evans and Wildy are full time feeders on public money.

Tudor Evans draws a fat annual allowance of circa £38,000 as Leader, plus the £thousands of extra committee money, whilst Wildy draws £14,000 care of the taxpayers, and enjoys yet more of your money as a so called consultant to Devonport Regeneration Company Partnership. Her husband, Cllr Tom Wildy, has a similar allowance, and draws substantial consultancy from the public purse.

With gnomes like this, the Column would rather have the REAL Cllr Brotherton, Lib Dem, his honesty and public service, any day. Well done the Lib Dems and we wish you well, Sir.

Hugely disappointed that he was only allowed one go at the groaning table of exotic foodstuffs at April's DRCP board meeting, because they rushed through the agenda and didn't have a half time break, our Chief Observer **Buffy Overload** poses the following questions:

WHAT WENT WRONG?

At a press conference held on 30th April 2001 at the Welcome Hall, Devonport, Mr Richard Bayly, Director of the Government Office of the South West, announced that the then Regeneration Minister, Hilary Armstrong, "had recognised the way the (Devonport NDC) bid was put together was a model of community engagement."

He said the Minister had "decreed that Devonport would get every penny of the £49 million the community had asked for."

In the 'Devonport People's Dreams NDC Delivery Plan 2001-2011' published in early 2001, the first words read: "Community led? We've heard that before? This time New Deal for Communities really means it."

Five years later, we are entitled to ask, "What went wrong?"

WHERE ARE THEY?

Staff at the DRCP office in Marlborough Street are overworked. This was stated at the last DRCP board meeting on 20 April. In future, there will be fewer board meetings where the public can attend, and fewer decisions will be made at board meetings.

More decisions on how NDC funds will be allocated will be made by small sub-committees of board members behind closed doors carrying out the recommendations of the executive and accountable body, the City Council, before recommending the decision to the board.

Public accountability will be even less than it is now.

The number of council employees at the DRCP office is now almost 30. Most of them live outside Devonport. The cost of employing these highly paid staff, together with other running costs of this council owned office, takes an estimated £1 million a year out of NDC funds, making it one of the most expensive small offices in Plymouth.

Passers by in this 'most deprived area' are often curious to see only a handful of staff in the office, and they are not seen out in the community.

The Column asks, "Where are they all? What are they doing? How long before they move to more discreet premises out of the public gaze?"

Conservatives - Lost or Strayed?

Despite the defection of Labour Councillors, the angst and frustration of the Devonport Community to the misappropriation of public money, the anger of North Prospect residents at losing their homes, the closure of Seaton Pool, the absence of City Council audited accounts for £51m SRB money, DCRP funds and more, we have seen no sign of the Conservatives whatsoever. They have disappeared. And without trace.

Common Purpose - Just What Is It?

From Susie Searchlight

In our last edition of The Column we reported on a rather strange organisation called Common Purpose that has been sucking public funds out of the City Council and other public sector organisations. We estimate that Plymouth City Council has so far wasted at least £100,000 of taxpayers money on this 'charity', which according to its own spokesman, has no tangible benefits. Sound like money for old rope? Yup!

Surprisingly, no sooner had The Column flagged up this scandalous waste of public money, than a new advert for Common Purpose appeared in the very glossy Plymouth magazine. What's more a group of local people are held up as benefiting from Common Purpose 'training', most we suspect, on taxpayers' money.

If the rather rag-tag bunch of individuals in the photograph represent 'new leaders' then perhaps we should be wary of being led. We may end up being led down the garden path on public money.

But what exactly are these 'new leaders' about? A number of individuals and publications are starting to get very interested in this phrase, particularly where there appears to be a drive towards creating a 'new' society under the surface of the old. The Common Purpose aim appears to be to occupy the space between the democratically elected government and the people, so as to allow the 'new leaders' to run a new very cosy private agenda. Since these Common Purpose leaders are unelected, unaccountable, and largely undeclared, many might assume that they need watching very carefully. Cronyism springs easily to mind.

The only trouble is that when questions are asked, Common Purpose leaders get very tetchy and aggressive. Mrs Julia Middleton is the high flying Chief Executive of Common Purpose and, benefiting from a salary of circa £80,000 she seems to have quite a lot to say for

herself. For example at a recent Common Purpose meeting, with the South West of England Regional Development Agency, Mrs Middleton referred to another meeting where "this little jerk kept asking what our (Common Purpose's) legitimacy was. Well, we just told him to shut up and got on with things". Well, Mrs Middleton, the "little jerk" is actually a decent member of the community with pertinent questions to ask!

The Column thinks that this chap had a very good point - just what is the legitimacy of Common Purpose to use public money to 'train' future leaders - for no tangible benefit? And to encourage our civil servants to hold closed door meetings with no agendas or minutes under Chatham House rules?

Come to think of it, what training or skills does Mrs Middleton have that allows her to 'select and train' anyone in anything. Certainly by her personal history she seems to have little connection with UK, our education system, training, or the effectiveness of our historic democratic society in Britain.

Aside from adults, Common Purpose is also targeting school children for selection and 'training' as future leaders. Again we ask what are the training credentials of Common Purpose people visiting schools, and what exactly is their agenda? The imposition of a federal European Union state under Common Purpose leaders?

The attention of The Column was recently drawn to a number of web sites and a periodical which are expressing concern over Common Purpose's activities. Whilst some concerns are general, a number are pointing at the fact that some individuals may have become mentally changed by Common Purpose training techniques. The latest publication is World Reports, which mentions suspect group psychology, changed people, relationship breakdowns and stress illnesses. If true, these are very worrying attributes about which parents will certainly want to learn more.

Until the full truth emerges, The Column feels that the general public might want to think carefully before being led willy-nilly by the 'selected leaders' of Middleton's Common Purpose.

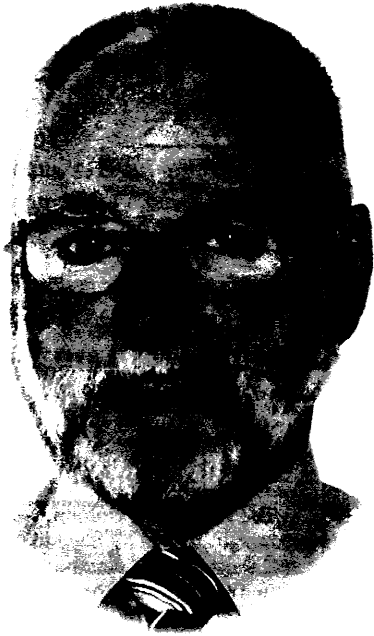
This Month's Competition!!

We didn't receive ANY entries at all to our **SOD YOU TOO!** Competition (perhaps it was a bit too difficult after all) so here's an easier one. Put a caption to this pic of Deputy PM John Prescott and email it before 15th May to: devonportcolumn@tiscali.co.uk



This is the best we could come up with in the office: "I'm running two Jags, an expensive wife, a mistress and New Labour - it's all getting a bit much!"

Lack of space this month prevents us taking up the theme of "Stinking Fish - the National Marine Aquarium" which will now appear in our next issue - honest!



'Good Man' Bill Goffin gets our vote for the City Council Elections on May 4th and as he's a truly Independent Candidate for Devonport we think Devonport People should back him too!

The Editor says "Vote! Vote! Vote! for Bill Goffin"

As the old saying goes – cometh the hour, cometh the man. And we are delighted to give our support to Mr William (Bill) Goffin who has stepped forward as an Independent Local Councillor Candidate for Devonport.

A local man through and through, Bill is a pillar of the Community, having also worked in Devonport Dockyard from 1957 to 1986 in a variety of roles. Originally trained as a craft fitter turner, Bill has a wealth of experience on practical hands-on skilled work in the yard, work which the local Devonport area is desperately short of today.

He has also had the additional responsibility as full time senior convenor for the Amalgamated Engineering Union (AEU), and in 1985 he was elected as a full time officer of AEU. He warned of, and fought against, the disastrous privatisation of the yard, which has cost so many local jobs as he predicted.

More to the point for Devonport today, Bill has come forward to support John

Williams in his battle against a lying, morally corrupt, and bullying DRCP, the Devonport Regeneration Community Partnership.

Bill has been shocked by the mismanagement of this organisation, the failure to produce audited accounts for £ millions of public money, and the blatant disregard of even basic standards of probity. But most importantly he has decided to stand up and do something by standing as a local Council candidate.

In a recent informal interview with The Column, Bill stressed that he wants to be able to get into the City Council to bring these people to account. "At the end of the day, Plymouth City Council is the accountable body for Devonport Regeneration Community Partnership, and has full responsibility for where hard earned public money is being spent, not only in Devonport, but across the City. It is high time that Tudor Evans and Plymouth City Council were brought to account for their actions, and in particular for their shocking treatment of John Williams and the wider Devonport Community. We're

not some guinea pigs in a social engineering experiment - this is a real Community with real People".

Bill goes on to say that "If I am elected, I will bring all of my experience and skills to bare on rooting out waste, corruption as well as the mismanagement of public money. After all, we work hard for our money, we are taxed more and more – just why should these people squander our money". Clearly Bill doesn't think much of the New Labour Council, or the Local Labour MPs. The Column notes that both our local New Labour 'mature babes' are running scared on issues of probity and the waste of public money. Not a squeak to be heard from them.

In contrast, Bill's a tough, no nonsense, 'say it as it is' person. If anyone's up to the job of starting to set things to right, The Column thinks it's Bill Goffin.

Devonport needs someone to cut through the smokescreen of New Labour lies, political correctness and spin. Give William Goffin your vote - he's clearly worth it!



Pin Back Yer Lugholes, Beaky's Squawking!

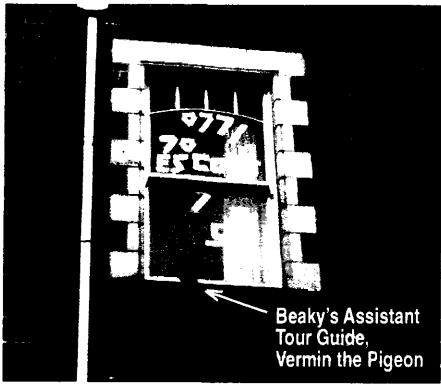
Beaky the Parrot, who lives at the top of the real Devonport Column, has been keeping his eyes and ears open to bring you the news other papers dare not print! If you have a story, email it in confidence to devonportcolumn@tiscali.co.uk

Beaky's House of Horrors Tour of Granby Green and Marlborough Street

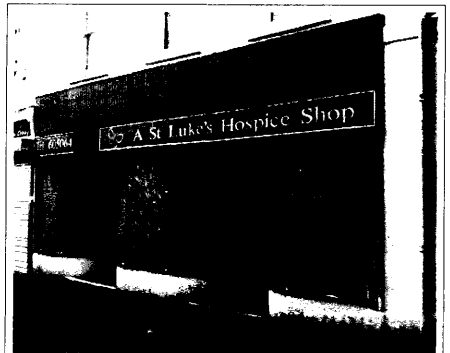
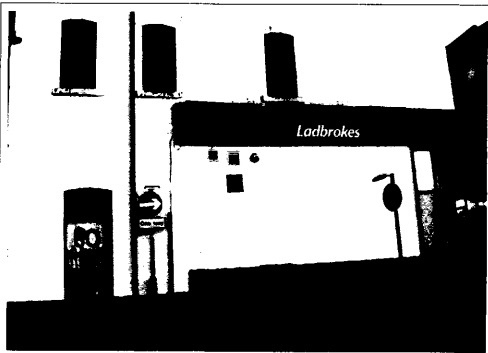
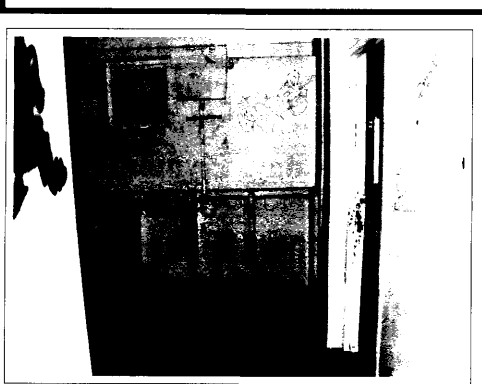
Believe it or not, Beaky has been a great entrepreneur in his time and had a thriving business until the cuttle mines became worked out and then the millet harvest failed in the drought of '76.

Looking at the deprivation in Devonport, he couldn't think how to turn another honest penny until one day he glided through Marlborough Street, you know, where Devonport Regeneration Partnership has its offices, and came up with a great idea! Why not set up a tourist business to show just how well regeneration is coming together in Devonport? And no better place to start than right there in Marlborough Street, home of DRCP, the architects of all the improvements!

Beaky's presently putting together a bid for a feasibility study into his brainwave, on the basis that even if the study gets rejected he'll have made a few bob out of it. But he wants you the public to judge - would you pay a fiver and come along on a Beaky Regeneration Guided Tour of the area, showing how it looks today? Just check out the pics below - all taken within a few steps of the DRCP bunker - and let him know - Beaky's future prosperity depends on you!



Beaky's Assistant
Tour Guide,
Vermin the Pigeon



It's Devonport all over again one more time in North Prospect

Nestled on a shelf at the back of the hall, your roaming reporter Beaky looked on as Tudor 'Boyo' Evans (New Labour) and Common Purpose 'Leader' (paid for with £4,500 of your taxpayers money) sweated profusely as North Prospect residents recently questioned his plans to bulldoze their neighbourhood.

As a long established Devonport parrot, Beaky is only too aware that what New Labour Plymouth City Councillors say and what actually happens are two very different things. So whilst Devonport people have had their homes flattened and were promised better housing in the future, the reality is they were bussed out and then found they couldn't afford the so-called low cost home prices to move back into. Name of the game New Labour 'social engineering' by wealthy New Labour Councillors, and their MP friends, at the expense of ordinary people on ordinary incomes, who've worked hard for their homes.

Lost for words and clearly under pressure, the normally bullish Tudor was weak and floundering. He could not guarantee that properties would not be compulsorily purchased nor that owners would receive sufficient payment to buy an equivalent size house in the new development. Beaky reckons that's robbery. Even a parrot can calculate that you can't buy a new home for that. Who'll really benefit from Mr Evans's plans? Why, the Housing Trusts and the old boy network Co-operative Land Trust they'll set up. And Common Purpose people. Just like Devonport, says Beaky.

Another Glorious First as Devonport Column Leads Way in Cash for Titles Race

Writes our Sponsorship Secretary, Maundy Gregory (long gone, but his corpse revived for the foreseeable future)

Here at The Devonport Column we are very hot on accountability, so we have to own up to the that we, the editorial team, are no longer bearing the full production costs of The Column. Starting with the April edition, generous anonymous sponsorship enabled us to print and distribute an additional 1360 copies!

Grateful thanks to our kind friends ... and it's now payback time. In future, potential sponsors should contact the editor at devonportcolumn@tiscali.co.uk, prove that they are the real McCoy by stumping up some of the folding stuff and then choose one honour from the following list.

Don't forget, it's first come, first served, so climb on board The Devonport Column Gravy Train!

So Roll Up! Roll Up! Limited Time Offer! Give us yer dosh and pick yer own title!

We're proud to be the first in Britain to confirm it - yes, we DO trade honours for donations to our worthy cause.

On the conveyor belt this month are some first class titles and there's a minimum cash sum donation against each one (no cheques or credit cards if you don't mind!)

- £50 Lord Haw-Haw
 - £25 Lady Shaver
 - £25 Duke of Earl
 - £100 Duchess of Duke Street (*nice one - Ed*)
 - 50p Sir Edam, Knight of the Grater
 - £2 Sir Osis of the Liver
 - £25 Bishop Bill of Truro (once he's retired)
 - £10 Duke Box Jury
 - £150 Noggin the Nog
 - £5 Baron Hardup (not you personally, of course, m'Lud)
 - £40 Lord of the Isles
 - £500 Lord of the Rings
 - £20 Lord of the Flies
 - £75 Count Basie
 - 20p Sir Feet of Cash
 - £1K Prime Minister of Great Britain (as we are between appointments right now)
 - £250 Lord Lucan (until he turns up)
 - £50 Marquis of Granby (*good link to Devonport - Ed*)
 - £100 King Haakon of Norway
 - £50 Prince Charming
- (*That's enough silly titles - Ed*)

Unavailable at present due to current title holder having a limpet-like grip on the Devonport Community's throat (*but not for much longer - Ed*):

Baron Swabey of Devonport, Mount Wise, Morice Town, Keyham(?), Devonport Park, Granby Island, Plymouth Albion, The Brickfields, The Community Land Trust, The Industrial Provident Society (and anything else you can think of).