

# Plymouth City Council squanders £100,000 on "Common" Purpose

Recently The Devonport Column was interested to see a large two page spread in the Evening Herald dated 22nd March 2006 on the subject of a little understood organisation called 'Common Purpose'.

As CP purports to be a charity that runs educational programmes for 'leaders', The Devonport Column feels that the wider public should be rather wiser to some of the characteristics of this dubious organisation, including the special courses run for schoolchildren. Just what are these courses for vulnerable children about?

In the interests of the truth, The Devonport Column certainly thinks that the Plymouth public would like to know just how much public money is being squandered on Common Purpose, which by its own admission in the Herald article, cannot quantify the benefits of the so-called 'leadership courses'.

Quote: "And do they (the Common Purpose Leaders) really all make a difference? Where's the proof?" unquote.

To which the answer from Common Purpose is, quote: "It is not one of those things that is easy to quantify", unquote. The Common Purpose spokesman goes on to say that a Common Purpose survey of trainees' satisfaction reveals that 75% feel enriched.

The Column notes that this positive survey result comes from a Common Purpose survey, not an independent one. Let's stick with the expenditure of hard earned public money to be 'enriched'.

## Money thrown away by the Leader of the Council

The first point is that Common Purpose courses cost money – a lot of money. And overwhelmingly you as the taxpayer foot the bill for courses conducted by people in the public sector. Just to take a few examples - Plymouth City Council, (£millions in the red and having recently thrown away another chunk of your money on costs associated with an unnecessary court battle over taxi licences), has spent up to £100,000 of your money on Common Purpose training.

Charged at some £3,950 plus VAT (£4,500), courses can be as much £9,500 plus VAT.

Posing proudly for the Herald photographer Tudor Evans - New Labour - appears happy for Plymouth City Council to spend an estimated £100,000 of taxpayers money on a course from which the benefits "are not easy to quantify". So whilst Seaton Pool is closed and vital social support services and amenities are shut down, there is money to burn on becoming a Common Purpose 'leader'.

## Who else is spending public money on courses with no tangible benefits to the taxpayer?

The Government Office of the South West – a major quango and baby of Two Jags Prescott – admits to spending over £60,000 on Common Purpose. Nice of the taxpayer to provide the cash. Prescott's own Office of the Deputy Prime Minister has also expended some £80,000 of your money.

Devon & Cornwall Constabulary, which is desperately short of cash to police our streets, has spent over £57,000. It may well be more as detailed police figures on expenditure seem a little vague.

The South West of England Regional Development Agency – over £30,050. Defence Logistics (effectively the Ministry of Defence) – over £36,000. These figures are the tip of the iceberg.

## Secret Meetings and Questions of Probity

As if the wanton expenditure of public money for no tangible benefit is not bad enough, Common Purpose has some additional and rather worrying sides to it. Common Purpose encourages and facilitates meetings under the 'so-called' Chatham House Rules. These rules allow Common Purpose individuals from both the public and private sector to meet behind closed doors, with no formal public agendas or minutes.

And as if this is not highly questionable where public money is concerned, individuals attending these secret meetings are also encouraged to reveal information which is then not directly attributable to them. Have we got the situation therefore where Common Purpose leaders with responsibility for awarding public money, are meeting in secret with private sector people who would love to get their hands on public money and assets?

Are you concerned? The Column is. Particularly when Common Purpose meetings have in fact taken place at key strategic development sites such as Plymouth Dome, Mount Wise and Devonport.

## Failure to declare

Unlike the Freemasons, who are obliged to declare their membership, the names of Common Purpose 'graduates' are not declared to the general public. This is insidious when, for example, even the legal department of Plymouth City Council is Common Purpose led.

## Charity or 'Cult'?

Perhaps even more worrying than the loss of public money and questions of probity is the fact that Common Purpose appears to have some very strange objectives – including creating a new, better society under selected Common Purpose leaders, and the selection and 'grooming' of children to create future leaders. Spooky? Read more in the next Devonport Column.

## Letter to the Editor

Sir,

I realise the contents of my letter do not specifically apply to Devonport but I do feel it is of direct relevance in light of the lies, deceit and propaganda that the people of Plymouth face and you are exposing in your newspaper.

As the readers of your fine newspaper will be aware there is very little news in the public domain that is anti EU. For example, the BBC and ITV television news seemingly only ever provide 'good' news stories involving the EU. Likewise, the printed news is almost entirely positive.

The heavily biased attitude of the media in general is well known and was brought home to me in particular for Channel 5 news on Saturday 25th March 2006 at the UKIP South West Rally at Exeter University when I was told by a member of the public attending the rally that her nephew, who works for Channel 5 News, said that all stories that are anti-EU are to be discarded.

Hence, the public are never afforded a balanced view of the European Project. Only lies and skewed propaganda in favour of the EU.

In fact, very similar to that which the people of Plymouth face from its own council when they are told lies and propaganda about such bodies as the Devonport Regeneration Community Partnership as highlighted in your newspaper.

It is indicative of the trouble we are in as a nation when the populace can only rely on the truth that is published in a newspaper such as the Devonport Column, a private enterprise from patriotic subjects that do not have a vested interest.

I sincerely hope you never reach the stage where you discard news because it is true.

Sincerely,  
**Laurence Keegan (UKIP)**

P.S. Visit [ukip-plymouth.org.uk](http://ukip-plymouth.org.uk) for more truth.

## Devonport Column April Edition

Dear Readers,

Thank you for picking up The Column. I'm sure you will enjoy it, and if so please pass it on, and tell all your friends. You may have noticed that we've jumped a month to get the edition out at the start of the month rather than towards the end. So don't worry – you haven't missed one.

As to be expected the Column is packed with hard hitting stories which we feel the public need to know about. Our local papers are OK but somehow they just don't seem to print the facts down at ground level. We do, and we're telling it like it is.

Stories cover more unsavoury treatment of Mr Williams by the Devonport Regeneration Community Partnership and a shocking tale of police overkill at a DRCP public meeting. We also expose a

funny little organisation called Common Purpose. You taxpayers have been paying thousands of pounds for it, but nobody told you until The Column came along. Suspicious? We are! Read on.

I'd also like to thank Readers for the letters and other material sent, particularly information on wrongdoing in the City. Seems to us that Plymouth is a rotten borough under New Labour, but since the national New Labour team are rotten, who's surprised? Many thanks for the 'police fax' copied to us – brilliant work, Mr Holmes. Sorry we didn't have space to print it, but we'll be following up the content!

In the next edition a look at our National Marine Fishtank and the £ millions pumped in, whilst we cannot provide care for our old people, give free dental treatment, or run Seaton Pool! Well done Tudor and the local Blair Babes.

God Bless, Ed.