

THE CRANE

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Protest pays off but housing concerns still high in Govanhill

It is about 18 months since local residents, tenants and the Crosshill and Govanhill Community Council raised the roof about the landlord situation in parts of Govanhill. Glasgow City Council have said that they are injecting over £3 million into the area that takes in Westmoreland St., Allison St., Langside Road and Dixon Avenue. Works are estimated to take six months to complete.

Who can you bank on?

Some flat owners are investing their own money in the refurbishment. Whilst there are some grants available, personal coffers are not deep for everyone. It is pretty hard to find the money when banks are not likely to offer reasonable interest rates on loans over 75%. Meanwhile public sector debt has escalated, as a direct result of bailing out the private banks to get them lending again.

These tenements have been neglected for some time.

The money is to be used to infill cavities and old mine workings which have had a destabilising effect tenements. Much needed renovations have been started, but there is a long way to go. Some of the work is so extensive and essential that some occupants have had to move out temporarily. The work includes structural repairs, treatment of dry and wet rot, re-tiling of roofs and stonework repairs. It is

hoped that work will start at 268 and 276 Langside Road quite soon. The residents there do not know if they will be asked to vacate their homes during works.

Local Resident highlights top down 'lack of resident involvement'

When asked about the Cladda Club site one local person pointed out that residents who live next to the Cladda Club site met with Cathie Cowan, Director of the South East Community Health and Social Care Partnership.

"On a walk round of the garden we pointed out that the garden had been opened before completion and without prior notice to the surrounding residents. We highlighted our concerns regarding the security of our back gardens and the lack of resident involvement in the development of the garden. The site also has scaffolding in it due to repairs being carried out on a neighboring tenement."

A decision has since been taken to close the site temporarily until repairs on the tenement are complete. The resident added 'We hope to consult with surrounding residents and local agencies, to explore how the garden can best be developed as a community asset.'

There remain many unanswered questions regarding landlordism, overcrowding and absentee owners in the area. The Crosshill/ Govan



Tenement flats Alison St/Victoria Road

hill Community Council, the Govanhill Residents Group and the people of Govanhill will continue to press for an inclusive process towards decent housing and environment for all who live in Govanhill.

For more information on the campaign you can contact Iain MacInnes, Secretary, Crosshill and Govanhill Community Council. Phone or text 07826 834 116.

GOVANHILL

LIBRARY

The library is in a temporary base while repairs are carried out to the building. The library is now at **Govanhill Neighbourhood Centre, 6 Daisy Street.**

If you haven't been for a while **go on**, go down and borrow a book, DVD, CD or get free internet access. Opening hours are the same.

WHO ARE WE?

The Crane is a community newsletter run by local volunteers. We are committed to community participation: **people working together on issues affecting their community.** The Crane is not affiliated to or funded by any business or local/national government agencies, nor is it affiliated to any political organisations. We aim to open our pages to stories of communities taking action and to exposing injustice without fear. We welcome any comments or ideas you might have. Even better why not get involved with producing and distributing The Crane.

Infestation of cockroaches is getting worse !

Due to the severity of the problem many feel an urgent need for at least 2 more infestation officers in Govanhill. Residents should contact **Cathie Cowan**, Director, *South East Glasgow CHCP*. **Phone:** 0141 276 6710 or 0141 276 6700 **Email:** Cathie.Cowan@glasgow.gov.uk or write to her at Forsyth House 151 Coplaw Street, Govanhill, Glasgow G42 7DE.

To Contact The Crane

Email: southsidecrane@googlemail.com

Website: <http://southsidecrane.wordpress.com>

Analysis - The Global Economy

All economies around the world have been hit by the first wave of a global economic crisis which follows the pattern of the prolonged slump of the 1930s. In the run up to the General Election next year all of the main political parties: Labour, the Tories, Lib Dems and the SNP have agreed that public spending will be cut with varying degrees of savagery from next year onwards. We have to ask a few basic questions on this – why should public spending be cut, what will be the effects and what should be done if cuts are agreed at Holyrood and Westminster as seems likely. Firstly why do these parties want to cut spending?

The Tories in particular have been screaming that the level of public deficit is far too high and needs to be brought down by cutting spending rather than raising taxes. This idea has been accepted by Labour and the Lib Dems although they might argue about how much should be cut. However, British levels of public sector debt are not above the commonly found level for most of the last 200 years and far lower than the Japanese public debt which is over 200% of GDP compared to 80% in Britain. More than this Britain is far more dependent

on public spending to get out of the economic slump, because British economy has a far higher proportion of banks and other financial businesses than any other country in the world. Most economists from Keynes onwards have agreed that cutting public spending in the middle of an economic crisis is a sure method of making the crisis worse as unemployment increases and the amount of money in the economy is reduced.

Given all this the only obvious reason for cutting public spending and public services is an effort to take an opportunity to reduce working class living standards by increasing unemployment, the average wage of workers and cutting the public services that workers depend upon. The crisis was created by the collapse of the banks, but the aim seems to be to make workers pay for it several times over. Recently Stephen Hester, now Chief Executive of Royal Bank of Scotland, one of the most bankrupt companies in history, and, like the rest of the banks, kept in existence by almost unimaginable amounts of taxpayers' money, made it clear he supports cuts in public spending. This while he and his friends carry on paying

each other millions in salaries and bonuses. Just to complete the picture many of the financial bosses don't even pay tax through exploiting various methods of tax avoidance. As one famously said recently - "I pay less tax than my cleaner!"

The problem for all of us is that all the main political parties have decided to impose cuts – the SNP is being slightly more canny than the rest as they will blame "London" rather than the public sector deficit, however, they all intend to cut services, jobs and the level of benefits. If anyone doubts this the proof is in the latest Holyrood budget which prompted local councils including Glasgow to talk of 10% cuts in staff and massive cuts in services.

For the majority of people who depend on public services and for those who work in the public sector this means there are about 8 or 9 months before the General Election next year to prepare for the defense of jobs, services and benefits against whichever party forms the next Government. All the plans so far released go far beyond anything ever dreamed of by Thatcher so we have to be ready.

TURN ON...TUNE IN...SUNNY GOVAN RADIO 103.5 FM

Check out Sunny Govan Community Radio for great tunes, local news and plenty of patter.

The Sunny Govan Community Radio Station has been broadcasting for a year and a half, and broadcasts 24 hours a day on **103.5 FM**. There is a really wide range of programmes, with something to suit all tastes and all ages. Fae country tae rock, the blues tae hip hop, it's all there.

There are shows for the wains, a show in Polish and they play local bands and musicians too. No prizes for guessing we are fans here at The Crane!

The station is all about the community, as they say on the website, **Community Radio is 90% community and 10% radio**. The station provides access to training and volunteering opportunities to encourage local crea-

tive talent. The whole point is to involve and represent real people like you. Do any of these areas interest you? Journalism, admin, radio production, marketing, web design or working with the community? If you have some time to spare get in touch with them on **0141 419 0040** or at **www.sunnygovan.org**.

Or of course you can just turn on...tune in.... and sing along.

DEAR GREEN PLACE.....

Some of you may have read an Evening Times story a few months ago about vandalism at Oatlands Allotments. **What the story did not say was what lay behind the vandalism.** Much of the petty vandalism was caused by the delayed removal of demolition rubble by property developers Gladedale.

Last summer the allotments' clubhouse and stores were burnt out. The Council and Gladedale want to move the allotments to a smaller site to make even more former public land available for private housing, unaffordable to most people.

A homeless group and a group that works with young people with Asperger's Syndrome will lose their allotments as a result.

The waiting list for the increasingly popular past time of allotment gardening will become even longer. **You already have to wait several years for most plots in Glasgow.**

Complaints from housing association tenants about snags in their new flats and building delays have not been dealt with for years in some cases. A representative of local housing association, Link, said that dates for delayed repairs were no longer deadlines, but, "aspirations". So that's alright then.

The Council have given Gladedale a 99 year lease for public land in Oatlands, **effectively privatising a large section of the Gorbals.** The downturn in the housing market has led to the

delays in the regeneration of this area. The greed of the rich is being paid for by the working-class yet again. No one in their right mind would gamble their household income in the bookies, **so why is the provision of such basic necessities as housing and public green space left to the casino of the marketplace?**



GO GREENER INITIATIVE IN EAST RENFREWSHIRE

Go Greener is an initiative set up in East Renfrewshire that aims to promote green awareness and to campaign for and achieve green actions that improve the environment locally and globally.

The initiative is community based and aims to promote green action in the community.

Ultimately it seems that many of the worlds problems are not being addressed globally or nationally, by governments or even Councils. Paralysis and the hope that existing methods will somehow start to work are the prevailing order.

Community initiatives and actions are a way in which we can effect change by working together locally.

Environmental and green issues are particularly suited to community action and organisation, and the results benefit everyone. The community can become stronger and be able to interect and communicate to achieve better standards of living for all, empowerment understanding. The community will be better able to deal with issues that affect it and t h e w o r l d .

Go Greener has actions and

initiatives occurring under the following areas:

Eco schools, Energy, Food, Greenspace, Transport, Waste Action and Community. As with all forms of activism Go Greener are always looking for volunteers and more members. **A dialogue with environmentalists and activists within Govanhill and other areas of Glasgow would be of great benefit to Go Greener.** We could share ideas and knowledge. If you would like to get in touch, go to:

www.gogreener.org.uk

Postal Workers and the build up to Christmas

It has been agreed between the postal workers union (CWU) and the Royal Mail management that there will be no further strike action before the 25th of December.

However this does not mean that the underlying cause of the dispute has been resolved. The postal workers working conditions remain the same and this dispute is set to continue. Undoubtedly the postal service is an industry under pressure as the way we communicate changes, but accounts from within the organisation show a workforce abused and harassed. Delivery walks are increasing in length. In the run up to Christmas 2008 some postal workers were finishing their

walks as late as 7 or 8 pm a couple of times a week. The stress increased numbers phoning in sick. This Christmas with the even longer walks it could be worse. If the new walks are not completed on time, overtime is not paid to the postal worker.

Whenever the workload in the Royal Mail increases casual workers are called in to help. Often, after the busy period casual workers are kept on so that they can be called at a moment's notice to come in. If they are not required, they are not called and not paid. They are paid less per hour than full-time workers. Casual workers are not unionised and have no representation if problems occur.

There's a worry within the postal service that the Royal Mail is being deliberately run into the ground so that people will be ready to accept its privatisation. There's a possibility that there may be more strikes before Christmas, but certainly afterwards. It's important all aspects of this situation are understood and that there is an understanding of what is at stake for the industry. In the United States protection of the postal service is written into the constitution. If the Royal Mail is privatised then there will be no future protection of the service, therefore lets support the Postal Workers now and let the government know what type of service we want.

"No pasaran!"

As the 3,000 plus anti-fascist demonstrators moving along Clyde Street passed the statue of La Pasionara, shouts of "No pasaran!" – "They shall not pass" rang out.

On Saturday 14th of November the people of Glasgow proudly stood up against a planned Scottish Defence League (SDL) action in the city. The SDL - an offshoot of the English Defence League - had been refused permission to hold an "anti-Islamist" demonstration in the City. However they still planned to make their presence known.

Two counter demonstrations, both dwarfing the SDL contingent in size mobilised. The first demonstration began after 10am with the aim of preventing the SDL taking to the streets. It made its way to Cambridge Street where the SDL were gathered in a pub. The pub was completely surrounded by police. At this point the strategy became somewhat confused as one part of the demonstration remained at Cambridge Street and another contingent marched to the main rally held at Glasgow Green.

The main rally began at 12pm and speakers included the human rights lawyer Amar Anwar, Nicola Sturgeon MSP, Tommy Sheridan, Mohammad Sarwar MP and Annabel Goldie MSP. All speakers roundly condemned the British National Party and its spawn the EDL/SDL (English/Scottish Defence League). All speakers highlighted the fact that the EDL/SDL are a fascist organisation, illustrated later in the day when the SDL were briefly allowed out of the pub, only to make nazi salutes. Nicola Sturgeon stated, "I'm proud to be standing with you today. I say to the EDP, SDL, BNP you are not welcome in Scotland. Our diversity is what makes us strong. For those who say they have a right to speak I say we have an opposite right not to listen to their vile output. There is not a country that has not been touched by Scotland's people and we are enriched being a multicultural and multi-faith nation."

After the speeches the demonstration marched to George Square. On its way it paused for

a minutes silence to remember those that had been the victim of racist murders in Scotland; Kunal Mohanty, Kriss Donald, Surjit Singh Chhokar, Shamsudden Mahmood and others.

At the end of the march in George Square many strangers approached each other spontaneously to say they were glad they came and would be strangers no more. Southsider, Mahmood Asif, said "What we don't need is somebody coming into our misery and stirring up hatred. My purpose in coming here today is to say from the heart – we are one, together. I will not tolerate intolerance."

It was great to see so many people out marching against fascism. Both marches served a purpose and both types of tactic along with other methods will be needed if fascists try to establish any sort of hold in communities in Glasgow "No pasaran!"

The Crane

The Crane is a community newspaper. To this end the newspaper represents the local community and is inclusive to all within the community.

Please get involved and make The Crane your newspaper. We shall endeavor to publish editions as often as possible and to contain as many articles and information as we can in each one.

Please send articles, information on events, comments, topics for discussion and details of all manner of community activities to The Crane.

We also run a weblog. This allows us to publish more articles and more up-to date information. We're looking to translate the weblog into as many languages as are spoken in the community.

If you could help with translation, please contact us.

The Crane meets at the Daisy Street Neighbourhood Centre. Notice of meetings are published on the notice board and on our weblog.

Lets build this paper and community together. Contact details on the front page.

POT HOLES

The pot holes in the Southside are getting worse and the winter has just started ! Report them!

Top of Victoria Road, neglected for about 2 years and just before the traffic lights in Victoria Road at Calder street – **that's gonna be biggy.**

NURSERY PLACES

Govanhill still loosing out after Victoria School Closure: see the next issue of **THE CRANE.**