

# WHAT ABOUT US?

One question which appears to have been ignored in the plan to close the Forest of Needwood School at Rolleston is — What will happen to the youth club?

The committee which leads the 1,000 strong membership has decided it wants to be heard and considered in any further consultations.

From the start Staffordshire County Council made it clear no consideration had been given to the community values of the school in considering its closure.

The youth club, which has a senior and junior section and is the biggest part-time club in the county, put its case at first through councillors and officials.

## ARGUMENTS

Having now established they are not being considered at all the members' committee is now demanding the county council publicly state: "That the unique position of Rolleston youth Club and its influence on the social life of the school and the community be considered and taken into account for the remainder of the consultation period."

An outline of the main arguments being put forward by the committee are:

- The Rolleston Youth Club is the largest youth organisation in Staffordshire.
- It is a part-time organisation. Many adults work on a voluntary basis. All its paid staff have a heavy voluntary commitment on top of their paid hours, therefore the club offers good value for ratepayer's money.
- The club does not have premises of its own. Over the past ten years the club has been promised on occasions, a building of its own, but because of its size, the expenditure involved and the fact that the school was happy to share its premises, no plans were drawn up.

# Youth Club joins the fight for survival

● The club takes its members, aged 11 to 21 from Rolleston, Stretton, Tutbury, Horninglow, Shobnall, Victoria and Hen-hurst. If the school closed and the club ceased to exist where would the youngest go?

● Rolleston Youth Club is the only club in Staffordshire to be officially recognised as a charity by the Charity Commission. Its record of community work is second to none in East Staffordshire and outstanding throughout the county.

Its most recent scheme is to give each pensioner living in Rolleston and over the age of 70 a birthday card and £2 voucher to be spent at local shops.

The lengthy list of activities enjoyed by club members is impressive. Everything from rifle shooting and roller skating to trampolining and train spotting is enjoyed by the members.

## ACADEMIC

Support for the club and school has come from the Chairman of Staffordshire Youth Service Sub-committee, Councillor Brian Campbell.

He said: "The Forest of Needwood is excellent in every sense, both as an academic institution but also as a community school with a youth club of which there is no better in the whole of Staffordshire, nor one that is more active."

"The county council are not into acts of educational vandalism or social vandalism and I think it would be hard to make out a case on both educational and social grounds for closing the school."

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By Karen Lockhart

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● No amalgamation is proposed for the youth club. Amalgamation on the Wulfric site would hardly be acceptable when ¾ of its membership live in the Dove Valley community (the county council plans to amalgamate the Forest with Wulfric, eventually closing the Rolleston school).

● There are five youth clubs operating west of the River Trent with a total membership of 350. The clubs could not cope with an influx of 1,000 young people. Only one of the clubs runs a junior section, so the 11-13 age group would be especially poorly catered for.

● It is feared that youth problems recently suffered in Stapenhill and Winhill could occur in the Dove Valley area. While other areas are crying out for youth clubs the Rolleston club is threatened with closure.

BURTON MAIL 3/3/84