

## 'Neddy' under threat

The National Economic Development Council may be scrapped following a decision of the TUC General Council to boycott the body until the TUC Congress in September.

Mrs Thatcher has been keen for a long time to abolish the NEDC, which has been in existence for 21 years. It has a

The campaign to save Rolleston's Forest of Needwood School has been joined by Burton MP Mr Ivan Lawrence.

He wrote to Staffordshire County Council asking for details of the proposed catchment areas, the council's intentions for the future of the Forest site — if it were to close — and what steps would be taken to safeguard the future of community activities in Rolleston.

Staffordshire Chief Education Officer Mr Tom Hadley replied that it was too early to

# MP joins Forest campaign

define the new catchment areas, that no decision had been made on the site or on the community issue.

The closure of a school in Burton is still being discussed — no decision has been made on which one will disappear, although Forest of Needwood has been proposed.

Mr Lawrence said: "I understand that with 1,500 fewer secondary school pupils in the Burton area there must be school changes.

Nevertheless the Forest is extremely well regarded for its high educational

achievements and the service to the local community given by the school and its buildings.

"Staffordshire County Council simply cannot expect the people most closely affected to surrender this school without a determined struggle and they cannot expect the Member of Parliament for Rolleston area just to sit idly by while so many questions remain unanswered.

"The people of Rolleston will take a lot more persuading that the closure of Forest is a sensible and desirable move — and so will I."

MARCH 7, 1984

**THE fight to keep the Forest of Needwood School open, despite possible closure under County Council education cuts, goes on.**

**Latest move in the battle over the Forest was the public meeting in Burton this week. Here the Trader continues to put the spotlight on a very worrying problem for the area.**

## 'Time to fight together'

STOP fighting among yourselves and join together in attempt to halt any plans to close schools.

That's the message to the supporters of both the Forest of Needwood and Wulfric schools who are involved in a bitter debate over which of them should close under county education cuts.

Councillor Marek Trelinski, Liberal Alliance parish councillor for Rolleston-on-Dove, says that the two factions have "played completely into the hands of county bureaucrats who find that such arguments strengthen their hand as they develop their assault on our education system.

"I firmly believe that we must all fight to save all our schools because we need them all and we shall continue to need them all in the future.

"The County Council base their figures on the school population in 1990; they conveniently ignore universally accepted predictions that it will return to present levels by the year 2000."

Councillor Trelinski claims that any school that is closed in the near future will have to be rebuilt to cope with the envisaged demand later — and that will prove a very costly exercise.

"I would strongly urge all Forest and Wulfric parents to stop fighting each other and join in the common struggle to save all our schools," he adds.

"Together they are invincible. Divided they shall fall easy prey to a County Council which is looking for a short term saving to solve short term problems.

"If present divisions continue the secondary school system in this area will be irretrievably damaged for a generation. Let us stand together for all our children's sake."

## LETTERS

Sir,

I refer to Rob Watt's letter published in the Trader on 29th February, in which, yet again, that word 'hysteria' is used, to describe what is no more than a real consideration of all the possible ramifications of the proposed closure of the Forest of Needwood High School.

The Forest is first and foremost an educational establishment, and a fine one at that. However, as far as the communities of the Dove Valley are concerned, it is much more than this. The existence or otherwise of the school has an extremely serious influence on community life and far from criticising this community for being far sighted enough to consider all the possible consequences of the authority's proposals, they should be congratulated.

Not everyone in the school's catchment area has a direct interest in the educational aspects of the school, but everyone does have an interest in the life and the environment of their community. This is one important factor the authority, (by their own admission) have ignored and one which Rob Watts appears to feel is irrelevant.

I should point out, that I was not the Trader's original source of information on their 'Prison article' and I was not their inspiration for running it. I was merely asked to comment on information from the national Press (Sunday Times 18th December 1983). In running the article, the Trader has brought an important issue to the notice of the whole of Burton. What does happen to school buildings and property in the event of closure? People should be aware of this.

Rob Watts does me a great injustice if he assumes that I am perfectly happy to see the Wulfric School close. I don't believe anybody involved in the current debate wishes to see any school close. As we see it, based upon the facts as presented to us, it is

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necessary for at least one school in the area to close and unfortunately, we can see the logic of the argument, that the school should be one of the two schools in the north.

We have prepared our case, and before Rob Watts accuses us of mounting a 'thoroughly selfish campaign' he should read what we have to say and not jump to conclusions on the basis of what he reads in the Press.

All we ask, is that once the details from both schools have been released, taking all factors into consideration, an objective

judgement and decision is made.

The academic performance and value of a school is only one of the factors to be taken into consideration. However, it would seem that in the eyes of some, on this subject, the Forest cannot win. If the school doesn't produce good examination results, then it can be criticised because the academic quality of its intake suggests that it

should. When the school does produce excellent results, then no credit is due, because for the same reason, this is to be expected.

The Forest has consistently produced results at a higher level than that which generally existed before comprehensive education and over the last six years, although the catchment area has remained the same,

the average number of higher grade passes per pupil has increased from 6.5 to 8.1. The actual figures are 6.5, 6.5, 6.9, 7.3 and 8.1. Come on Rob, you're a member of the profession yourself, give credit, where credit is due.

Ken Green,  
Chairman of Governors,  
Forest of Needwood  
School.

I have received from the members' committee of Rollerton Youth Club a copy of your newspaper dated 29th February 1984. In this is printed a letter from Councillor Rob Watts in which, he states:

"The school serves the community to no greater degree than the schools in Burton serve theirs."

As chairman of the County

# Fight to save the 'Forest' school

Youth Community and Careers Sub-Committee, I am in a position to know the youth and community provision available throughout the whole of Staffordshire, including Burton.

While not implying any criticism of the youth and community provision in the Burton schools, the provision made at the Forest of Needwood High School is second to none in Staffordshire.

The Evening Institute is the fourth largest in Staffordshire. It is well organised and bearing in mind its budget, it operates at its maximum level.

The Youth Club is outstanding. It is the largest, and most active in Staffordshire with around one thousand members aged 11 to 21. The commitment of the staff is exceptional. The paid staff undertake a high level of voluntary commitment and many adults from within the local community assist with events and activities on a voluntary basis. The record of the members' committee over many years is recognised throughout Staffordshire. They have actively involved themselves at all levels in all county events and competitions.

Within the community the Youth Club members organise a number of outstanding events

and activities. For ten years a floodlit "It's a Knockout" was held which attracted annually over one thousand people of all ages. The club has run two "all-night" discotheques for its members, the last of which I personally attended and was immensely impressed.

The Youth Club received national recognition for their outstanding community record when, in 1982, they were accepted by the Charity Commission as a registered charity, the only Youth Club to receive this recognition in the county.

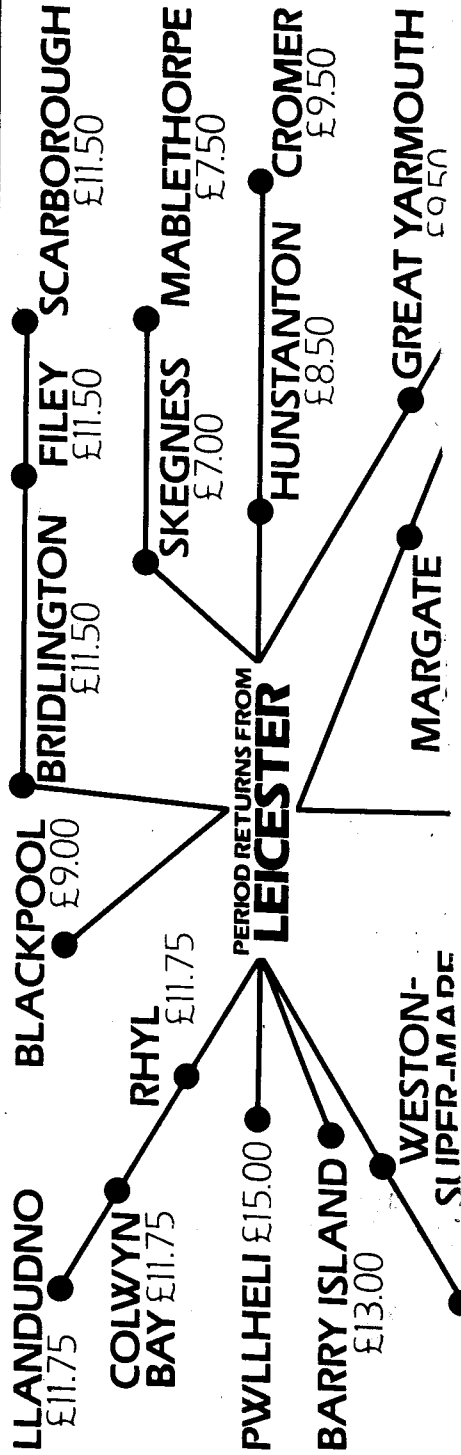
To claim as Councillor Watts does that the school serves the community to no greater extent than the schools in Burton serve theirs is to do these young people a considerable disservice. I understand that they have written to him directly with full information on their Youth Club and invited him to attend any of their activities. I hope he will avail himself of this invitation.

It is the loss of this exceptional community provision that concerns me greatly in the present rationalisation plan under discussion. Falling roles offer the opportunity to increase community provision where it has already been established successfully. If we wish a more civilised society with less social problems over the next quarter of a century, we must ensure that exceptional community provision of the type offered at Rollerton is maintained, supported and increased.

Councillor B. Campbell.

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