

Levenshulme Anti-Poll Tax News

Issue No. 2

JULY 1990

*Issued Free
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To Help Cover Costs*

Levenshulme Anti-Poll Tax Union - CAN'T PAY + WON'T PAY - Organise To Defeat The Poll Tax

75% NON-PAYMENT IN MANCHESTER

If you had any doubts about the level of opposition to the poll tax you can forget them. Of all those who have received a poll tax bill in Manchester, less than one in four have paid anything.

The council are now planning to send out over a quarter of a million final demands threatening legal action if we don't pay up. Apparently this step, which they admit is drastic, is for our own good, they want to stop us falling into debt.

It is one thing to threaten legal action, it is another thing to carry it out; the city treasurer said his officers are still investigating the legalities of this decision. And to cap it all there is a rumour going around that the poll tax computer has not been programmed to send out reminders.

Council leaders admit that administering the poll tax is a nightmare with staff having to work 24 hours a day, 7 days a week to cope with the mess.

Of course the council leaders could end the nightmare of the poll tax tomorrow by joining our campaign to defeat this vicious tax. If one major council, like Manchester, were to throw its weight behind the campaign of mass non-payment, others would certainly follow and we could put an end to the poll tax in a matter of weeks.

IT PAYS TO GO TO COURT

Delays and protests brought a South Tyneside council's court action against over 1,000 alleged poll tax non-payers close to disarray.

The hearing at South Shields magistrates' court on 20th. June ended after more than five hours with 117 cases adjourned because summonses issued by the council were contested.

Cases were found proved against 943 people, none of whom attended the court, and the court made liability orders enabling the council to take steps to try to recover the cash.

On the 21st. June Anti-Poll Tax campaigners clogged a magistrates' court in Goole, Humberside, where Boothferry district council were attempting to obtain liability orders against 879 non-payers. Only eight cases were heard and two of these were dismissed because of administrative errors.

The message is clear, it pays to turn up in court, so make sure you have your day in court.

The Greater Manchester Anti-Poll Tax Federation has a list of solicitors who will defend us.

If you want to defeat the poll tax join us. Remember sooner or later the council will start to take people to court. We need to be organised to defeat them.

The latest estimate is that 14 million people have paid no poll tax. Here are some non-payment figures, Birmingham 50%, Haringey 75% Exeter 70%, Stafford 25%, Tunbridge Wells 33%, Hull 50%, Rhondda 50%, Cambridge 40%.

Greater Manchester Anti-Poll Tax Federation

PAY NO POLL TAX DEMO

**MARCH & RALLY
SATURDAY 7th. JULY
Assemble - 12 noon
All Saints, Oxford Road.
RALLY ALBERT SQUARE**

Speakers: TERRY FIELDS MP

Andrea Ennisuoh, National Union of Students
Roger Bannister, NALGO N.E.C. (Personal Capacity)
**Plus Live Entertainment - Manchester Bands,
Rap, Poetry & Music**

**Join us on the March behind the
Levenshulme Banner**

Levenshulme Anti-Poll Tax Union

We meet on the Second and Fourth Thursdays of each month, at the Islamic Centre, Barlow Rd., (near junction with Stockport Rd).

Meetings this month

**7-30pm Thursday 12th. July
A LOCAL SOLICITOR will explain
THE POLL TAX LAW**

**7-30p.m. Thursday 26th. July
Discussion on the Current Situation.**

How to stop the bailiffs

What do bailiffs do?

Bailiffs are usually private debt collectors who will try and collect a payment for poll tax or a fine for non-registration.

The council must first get a liability order against you from a magistrates court - then it is the council's decision whether to use bailiffs or not.

The legal term for what bailiffs do is "distress". If they can't persuade you to pay the debt they can try and take some of your personal possessions to the value of the debt.

Are bailiffs like the police?

No. They have no powers like the police and are not employed by the courts. You cannot be in contempt of court and the criminal law is not involved.

What powers do bailiffs have?

Their powers are strictly limited and the procedure is different to that in Scotland. There is no equivalent in England and Wales of a "poinding" - valuation of goods - prior to a warrant sale.

The court must provide a warrant for the bailiffs in addition to the liability order. This is just an administrative step, with no additional court hearing. They might tell you about the warrant just to put the frighteners on.

Putting the frighteners on is what the bailiffs try and do - they hope to intimidate you into paying. Bailiffs are adept at getting into homes and will try every stroke in the book.

SO KNOW YOUR RIGHTS.

- As soon as you get wind of the bailiffs contact the anti-poll tax union (see below). The bailiffs don't want any hassle and will retreat when we mobilise hundreds of people against them.
- If bailiffs come they should show identification and give you a copy of Regulation 39 and Schedule 5 of the Enforcement Regulations 1989.
- If you are not in they may leave a note saying when they will return. Make sure the anti-poll tax union is warned.
- Otherwise the bailiffs can only get into your house if you let them in. **THEY CANNOT FORCE THEIR WAY IN** but can climb in through an open window.

However, they may be within their rights to force a second door if they've been let in the first one, as in flats with a communal entrance.

If they push past you and force their way in you can call the police to have them removed.

- Bailiffs can only come in daylight hours. Put pressure on the council, through the anti-poll tax union, to publicise the dates and time when bailiffs are coming. This makes it easier to mobilise people outside your home to keep the bailiffs away.
- If the bailiffs get in they can "lay claim" to goods that belong to you. But they cannot claim fixtures and fittings, or goods that do not belong to you - ie. things on HP or things you have just sold to a trusted friend for a nominal sum!
- The bailiffs will ask you to sign an agreement to pay something by a certain date (including something towards their costs). If you sign and they leave the goods in your house this is a "walking possession". You then have a time limit to pay before they sell the goods at auction.

- Once in possession, the bailiffs can return and forcibly enter your home and take your goods. It is a criminal offence to remove goods after they have been "laid claim" to.
- So everything hinges on the bailiffs getting into your house. They might claim to have "walking possession" just by looking in the window. This is nonsense - they cannot know what is yours and you haven't agreed to anything as the regulations require.
- They may claim that looking in the window is a valuation - this is waffle to make you think they have started a process. Don't worry, they're panicking.

Remember, bailiffs are the only real power that councils have in Scotland and they have got nowhere after 17 months! In Scotland the bailiffs - called sheriff officers - have a procedure to use force but still have not succeeded.

There are only 1,000 bailiffs for all the councils in England and Wales. They don't stand a chance against 14 million of us - the poll tax non-payers - as long as you know they can't get in unless you let them. The anti-poll tax unions are ready to back you up!

FINANCIAL APPEAL to all Supporters & Members

We need your financial support to produce leaflets, to prepare for the court cases, and to help finance the National march against the poll tax, from Glasgow to London this September.

If you are against the poll tax, why not make a donation (details below).

Thanks for donations from members and supporters in Kingsway Ave., Carrill Grove & Limefield Terr.

I/We want to *join and/or donate to
Levenshulme Anti-Poll Tax Union

*(Delete as Appropriate) Membership 50p.

Please make Cheques Payable to
"Levenshulme APTU"

Please Use BLOCK CAPITALS

NAME/S

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ADDRESS

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TEL No.

Return to any of the following

Dominic Byrne, 20 Fortuna Grove, Man/c M19 2BP.

Pam Bromley, 2 Central Avenue, Man/c M19 2ED.

Elizabeth Scott, 5 Wetherall Street, Man/c M19 3GE