

Pavement Perspectives ( Round 2)

Meeting held on Thursday, 18th November.

Present: Ernest, [Privacy] Hugh, Julian, Jeremy, Caroline, [Privacy] Jim Pickford,  
[Privacy] Phil, Paul, Geoff, Nick.

Apologies :M.Lipson and [Privacy].

I have summarised main points - apologies for any inaccuracies ..Carolyn

PART I PERSPECTIVES

Jim P.

As an individual he hopes not to be around much longer if a certain project comes to fruition. He felt only way P can continue is with more commitment and more sales. Going to AWA meeting and will advocate they take more copies and increase sales. If each group represented on P collective did this would increase sales. Agreed with [Privacy] - group become too inward looking and there is a need to redress the balance work/commitment.

[Privacy]

telephoned to say he thinks P should continue and will continue to sell 30 copies per issue, but because of Union commitment cannot really offer more time and it does help his union work.

[Privacy]

She joined following Whitelands day of action. The fact that Whitelands students immediately felt they should approach P is indicative of its standing as the radical alternative voice . As to own commitment - difficult to increase this in term time . Provides useful view for students, but suggest P should broaden out and have book and theatre reviews, more on health and women.

Julian

Given situation a lot of thought since last meeting and conclude we should keep P going. Last time we discussed evaluation but difficult to calculate effect other than by looking at sales. In community politics difficult to mobilise other than the extremely progressive working class and then usually only around specific issues. Important to maintain all possible vehicles of counter - propaganda for the future as he feels there is a more repressive period style coming .

2) What practical alternatives are there if we don't do Pavement - very little

in his opinion. He suggests a more concerted approach to activities already going on e.g. select several political groups and suggest mutual help - attend meetings and explain the role of a socialist paper - this may produce commitment locally in a way that S.W. or Red Weekly can never do as they do not relate to local issues.

Jeremy

Agreed we must approach political and other local groups in favour of continuing. The difficulty with community groups they take P for granted or say we are not interested in them. e.g. BUP coverage related more to our close links than the amount of struggle etc. they have been involved in.

Caroline

Felt we must try and break through current apathy in community groups and try and reverse effects of downturn. Also Pavement brought together different individuals from political left and gave us a chance to usefully discuss all the current issues.

Hugh

Said difference between BUP and say CPAG is that BUP were prepared to disrupt meetings so we were pushing on action group not just a talking shop. Similar situation with WCAPP whereby dustmen picketed a private hospital and were helped to do this by distribution of Pavement within their ranks. It is these kinds of struggles P should be publicising.

Privacy

P is good because it is easy to read and people who buy it would not buy S.W. or Red Weekly as they would not understand these papers and would be mystified by their content. In his opinion P changes ordinary peoples' perceptions of local activity.

Paul

From PAAC's viewpoint P is crucially important to its work, as without it PAACs attempts to become a really combative mental health group will be impossible, e.g. If forced to intervene in a T/A as a community worker this produces a different attitude to going in as a political worker selling P.

P can be a useful campaigning vehicle - not just a local emphasis as it gives people a perception of their individual role. Privacy was right about P becoming routine. If P continues it must be innovatory - self development. We need more discussion to attempt to try and change conception of what is politics, i.e. regular articles on women's health, mental health. In addition it must be a campaigning paper, although this is difficult when there are few campaigns to take up. He thought P's features on racialism an indicator of what

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Ernest (Empty content)

Had agreed with a good deal of Privacy's paper and did consider that may be Pavement should be closed down. However, on further consideration he felt we must keep a base for counteracting the attack by the media and Tories on working class (Blacks and unemployed). But we need to increase sales and carefully consider how to restructure group so workload shared. He felt we could include the various stories as was suggested, but first they had to be written.

Nick

said he wanted to keep P going. He added that Privacy and Privacy had volunteered to organise a Pavement Disco (Benefit) to raise money to relieve the financial pressure and give everyone more time to discuss future of P.

Phil

Had tried to evaluate C.P. reaction to P and most thought it great. He asked what is political role of community paper - to create Battersea Soviet or just to take people a step along the way. He felt this was the central issue.

Scott

Agreed with continuing Pavement and felt it should try to introduce regularly some of the topics suggested.

There followed lengthy discussion about role of Pavement as campaigning paper and or paper with strong editorial line and at this point there was a good deal of argument about Pavements' role.

Privacy felt Pavement was now 'useless' and that it could not do what he wanted it to. It was a failed experiment - also he wanted to have time to develop political theory and think about his position. He still wished to leave group.

Phil saw such differences of opinion about direction and the way involvement developed once started in group that he couldn't see Pavement being able to continue.

The discussion ended around how Pavement works as a campaigning paper - it can't actually organise people as it hasn't the resources but it can inform and give fuel to help bring local people together to fight the cuts. (Paul)

And so we talked ourselves into a future, at least for the present !!

It was agreed we wanted Pavement and that it had a real purpose in the Borough but some doubts still about our ability to keep it going .... and so into the night.

PART III ORGANISATION

It having been decided to carry on P the following points were agreed:-

- 1) No P will be brought out for Nov/Dec. i.e. issue 6/10 will not be produced. This will give a minor respite from selling/typing/layout etc. to enable more discussion.
- 2) The next P will be produced just before Xmas.
- 3) A system of rotating editorial responsibility will be instituted (if agreed) with two persons acting as joint editors for two issues.
- 4) Paul and Caroline volunteered to fill the editorial chairs for the next two issues. Next Pavement to concentrate on the cuts issue.

Martin Lipson says he is prepared to give more time to Pavement - could do 2 pages. Hugh says he could do one page. Agreed it might work best if those doing layout met for one afternoon/evening to do as much as possible.

Privacy at Privacy is prepared to do typing.

- 4a) Agreed to look more closely at contacting local groups and arranging meetings.
- 5) A further meeting was arranged for Monday, 29th November, at Ernests' at 8.00 for 8.30 sharp
- 5a) Julian suggested that everyone should contribute to street and estate sales.
- 6) It was agreed that the Pavement showing of 'All the Councillors' Men' to take place at The Latchmere, Battersea Park Road, S.W.11. on 11 December at 7.30 p.m. would go ahead. If we have to cancel nearer the date well we have to cancel.