



POND HALL ACTION GROUP

Newsletter No. 3

November 1995

The fight is not over!
**Don't believe everything you
read in the press.**

By the time this newsletter arrives, most of you will know that on 24th October 1995, East Lothian District Council, as was expected, confirmed it's intention to demolish the Pond Hall.

- **DESPITE** the fact that we produced our Prospectus within the time limit set by East Lothian District Council;
- **DESPITE** all the publicity;
- **DESPITE** the survey last April which showed, without a shadow of doubt that the people of Cockenzie and Port Seton want to keep their Pond Hall;
- **DESPITE** 3 very well attended public meetings when the very strong feelings of this community and neighbouring communities were made abundantly clear;
- **DESPITE** the support of the Community Council;
- **DESPITE** all these things, East Lothian District Council has not deviated one inch from it's original plans, published last March to demolish the Pond Hall and build houses on the site.

THE PROSPECTUS - A REMARKABLE ACHIEVEMENT

For all those who were unable to come to the Emergency Public Meeting on 11th October 1995, a reminder first of all, of what has happened since the last newsletter.

During the summer, a small group worked hard on the Business Plan. This involved speaking to experts, obtaining specialist professional advice and collecting information from many sources. As new information came to hand, the Plan had to be modified. In normal circumstances preparation of a Business Plan takes a long time - up to a year and can cost up to £10,000. For the small Group working in their spare time and with a tight budget, it could be expected to take much longer.

On 5th September 1995, after less than 2 months, when a letter was received from Council Chairman, George Wanless telling us that the future of the Pond Hall would be discussed at the District Council meeting on 12th September 1995, the Business Plan was nowhere near ready. So we pleaded for more time and were given 4 weeks grace - a ridiculously short space of time.

Due to superhuman efforts by several individuals, our prospectus was ready on time - a remarkable achievement. It was delivered to the County Buildings in Haddington on the deadline - 10th October 1995.

The Prospectus is the first stage of the Business Planning process. It describes a financially viable development which meets most of the needs and wishes of the local community as identified - the survey last April. The facilities provided compliment those already available in the Port Seton Centre. It meets the requirements of the District Council's 5 year plan.

The Prospectus has 2 purposes:-

1. To be used as a starting point for further discussion with the District Council.
2. To be used to attract potential funding sources.

The prospectus is on display in the library. If you haven't seen it yet, go along and have a look. You are sure to be impressed, as were several professional experts from outside the community. Whilst L.E.E.L. (Lothian & Edinburgh Enterprise Ltd) said they could not comment on the contents at this stage, they too, were impressed by the professional presentation.

The Prospectus was explained at the Emergency Meeting on 11th October 1995 which was attended by over 300 people. John Home-Robertson MP said at that meeting that "he would support us to the hilt in our efforts to achieve constructive dialogue with the District Council".

OUR LISTENING COUNCIL - WHAT A JOKE!

Even with the support of John Home-Robertson, our efforts to achieve constructive dialogue seems doomed to failure:-

- A letter requesting a meeting to discuss the Prospectus was ignored;
- At the District Council meeting on 24th October 1995, the Prospectus was rejected! Council officials admitted that they had only a brief opportunity to examine it;
- Even the compromise proposal, suggested by John Home-Robertson, that an independent and unbiased survey be commissioned to identify the best site for a swimming pool to serve the catchment area of Longniddry, Cockenzie and Port Seton and Prestonpans was rejected.

BUT ALL IS NOT LOST

Reluctantly, we have been forced to the point of taking legal action. A meeting with our lawyer and a Q.C. will take place this week. The Community Council will be officially represented at the meeting. The outcome will be made known as soon as possible.

Depending on the advice of the Q.C., further steps in the legal process may be necessary. At the Emergency Meeting on 10th October 1995, those present gave full support to this course of action.

This community is now living up to it's motto:-

HAZARD YET FORWARD

MORE NEWS VERY SOON!

