

Jan 11th 1973

Ugandan

Asians welfare work threatened

The Salvation Army will have to temporarily abandon the welfare work they are doing at the Greenham refugee camp unless they get help in running an annual fund-raising effort.

The Newbury Corps are urgently seeking people to run their 1973 self denial appeal so that their own volunteers can carry on at Greenham.

This week the Corps have been circulating letters asking for help in raising the £700 necessary to allow them to continue their social and missionary work.

“Unless we have some help from kind friends with the collecting we shall have to completely withdraw from the Greenham Camp for at least

one month,” says the letter.

“There is now only the WRVS and ourselves undertaking the welfare work and you will understand that our complete withdrawal would mean great hardship on the Asians and the small staff that runs the camp.”

They hope to raise the money they need during February from door to door collecting and from donations. Anyone interested in helping is asked to contact Major Albert Stevens at Newbury 4633.

NO CHRISTMAS ✓ TREAT FOR MANY ASIANS

There has been a disappointing response to the plan to entertain Ugandan refugees for tea in local homes on Boxing Day.

Yesterday the Newbury and District Council of Churches had received only 53 invitations which means that just half the interested Asians will be able to sample a typical English Christmas.

"I am hoping that more people will contact us over the next few days," said the Rev. David Ratcliffe, one of the organisers.

He said that about 400 Asians had shown interest in the scheme. A lot more than expected had made other arrangements such as visiting relatives.

"I can quite understand people being daunted by the prospect," said Mr. Ratcliffe. "Most of the offers have been to entertain a husband, wife and two children. The families with about five children are proving difficult."

One of the best responses has come from a Roman Catholic Church at Basingstoke where 12 families have offered help.

If you would like to entertain a refugee family you can contact the Council of Churches re-settlement camp office at Northbrook 6161, extension 25.

Asian guests at party

A group of Ugandan Asians at Greenham saw the New Year in last week — slightly belatedly — with the help of members of the Thatcham United Reformed Church and Thatcham Methodists.

Over 80 adults and children joined in the games and fun, and enjoyed a feast of cakes, sweets, biscuits and orange dion.

18-1-73

'Startling' exam results by Asians

ASIAN youngsters who began studying locally after being turned out of Uganda have produced some startling O-level exam results.

Despite the tremendous upheaval they faced, the refugee youngsters at the Greenham camp have produced a 53.4 per cent pass rate which is about the same as the national figure.

Between them the 22 students sat 147 exams in 15 different subjects ranging from English Language to Metalwork.

Since arriving at Greenham their studies have been organised by South Berks College of Further Education who sent Mr. Arthur Owen, head of their building department, to supervise their work at the camp.

"I have been teaching for 20 years and I have never known people so eager to learn," he said. "It has been a most interesting time for me and I think it has done me a lot of good."

He said that the exam successes are a great achievement considering that the Asian students lost all their notes when they left Uganda. And on arriving here they could only be taught in a few of their subjects and had to do a lot of work on their own.

25-1-73

House for Asians

A FOUR - BEDROOMED house in St. John's Road, Newbury, may be made available for housing Asians from the resettlement camp at Greenham.

A temporary tenancy of 65 St. John's Road has been offered to the town council by the Department of the Environment who have acquired the property, which is to be demolished to make way for the ring road extension.

The borough council's special committee considering assistance for the Asians were told on Monday that the house would be unsuitable for use by families on the housing waiting list unless converted into two units.

It would not be worth spending money to carry out such a conversion, however, because of the short-term nature of the tenancy. It is likely to be available for a year or so.

However, the committee considered it would be useful as accommodation for one or possibly two Asian families without conversion and the council are to be recommended to accept the tenancy for this purpose.

Town Clerk, Mr. Leslie Southern, reported that other inquiries about empty property in the town had proved abortive.

He was instructed to make further inquiries about the availability of Post Office-owned houses in Kings Road and any other properties that become empty.

Protest over house for Asian family

A BOROUGH COUNCILLOR has criticised the decision to temporarily let a Newbury house to a family of refugees from Uganda.

Coun. Dick Easterbrook told the housing committee on Friday that he did not approve of the refugees getting a "short cut" on to the housing list by moving into a house which must eventually be demolished to make way for a new road.

"It seems ridiculous to put these people in a house which is only going to be standing for another 12 months—after that they will have to join the council waiting list.

"I feel that the Department of the Environment have misled us on this issue when they said they would finance houses for Ugandan Asians. I am not very happy with the way this has been brought about but I suppose it is past history now."

Coun. Easterbrook asked why the letting of the house had not come before the full housing committee and how much money had been spent on repairs before the Asian family moved in.

Town clerk, Mr. Leslie Southern, told him that the matter had been dealt with by a housing sub-committee and their recommendation was accepted by the full council. He had therefore been acting in accordance with their wishes in letting the house.

He said that the house was in very good order, the owner having left only recently, and very little money had to be spent.

The house had been bought by the Department of the Environment for demolition when work gets underway on the proposed southern extension of the town's ring road.

The council had been told that they could let the house in the meantime and the sub-committee had decided to make it available to an Asian family. It was a substantial house with four bedrooms and ideal for a large family.

Coun. Mrs. Pauline Bodin said that the refugee family would not be getting special treatment on the housing list. They would be serving the normal one year waiting period, the same as everyone else.

"I don't think race and colour should come into this at all," she said.

"I am not against colour," lied Coun. Easterbrook, but it is a fact that we have people coming home from abroad who have to go to the bottom of the waiting list.

These people are getting a short cut."

In October Coun. Easterbrook resigned from the Labour Party because he did not share their views on the housing of Asians from Uganda. He said then that he considered the housing of any Asians whether in council houses or dilapidated houses in the private sector could only swell the housing list further.

Penny's Patch * * * with women in mind

11-1-73
ROOM FOR WOMEN

week on this page we saw how the Ugandan managers at Greenham were settling into their life. This week it is the turn of the housewives who are staying at the camp. In the picture on the left a group — helped by voluntary workers — are busily away at their patchwork. Their work helps pass away the hours.

