

Save the Unemployed Workers Centre



For 15 years the Unemployed Workers Centre has operated from 4 Crestway Parade, Hollingdean; providing benefits/employment rights advice, organising outings for children, and much more. Yet now we are at risk of closure from **24 November!**

If you, your friends or family have been helped or welcomed by us, or just wish to show your support, please come to our public meeting. Also, please join our Facebook group 'Save the Brighton Unemployed Centre'.

SAVE THE CENTRE PUBLIC MEETING

Thursday 6 November, 7.30

Hollingdean Community Centre,
Thompson Road, Brighton, BN1 7BH

Without any prior consultation, at the end of August Brighton Unemployed Centre Ltd directors Tony Greenstein and Bill North issued a three-month notice of their resignation from the lease of our building. With their resignation, they also tried to dump a massive debt on to the workers and volunteers of the Centre.

We have been left with a 'choice': being evicted or accepting the responsibility for this large debt. We think that either options are unacceptable.

Imposing poverty amidst plenty



For 15 years Tony Greenstein had run the Centre as its treasurer and manager. During these years, he spent little or no money on essential maintenance work, despite BUC Ltd's contractual duty to keep the property in a good state of repair.

As a result the workers and volunteers of the Centre were forced to work in an increasingly dilapidated building.

Concerned at the state of the building, a few months ago we commissioned a partial report from structural engineers Mishon McKay. This report estimated approximately £48,000 costs for structural repairs, and perhaps far more if the damage was worse than that determined by a partial survey. Yet, on 23 July 2014 our management committee preferred to follow Tony Greenstein's advice to dismiss this report and only agreed to pay for a few superficial repairs.

Asset stripping?

In fact, there would have been sufficient money for repairs, and even improvements, of our building. During the last 15 years, while our premises deteriorated, money was saved into what was to become known as a 'building fund'. Back in November 2013 Tony Greenstein reported to our management committee that the money accumulated in this fund had reached £507,736.75.

Where has the money gone?

Following Tony Greenstein's retirement from the day-to-day management of the Centre in February 2013, we were told that the directors of BUC Ltd were moving the 'building fund' into a trust of which they would be trustees. However, at a meeting held on 23 July 2014 they failed to provide us with details of this trust. They also failed to provide any accounts for the 'building fund'; in fact we were told that the 'building fund' *did not belong to the Centre* and was not subject to decisions of our management committee.



Evicted or ruined?

BUC Ltd's director knew how to get away with their massive liability. In their letter dated 28 August 2014, which announced BUC's resignation from the lease, Tony Greenstein and Bill North offered to 'assign' the lease to two Centre's workers, identified by them as the 'representatives of the [Centre's] charity'.

What the letter did not explain was that the 'assignment' would transfer to the workers, together with the lease, *the responsibility of restoring the building to a good state of repair*. We only discovered this by speaking directly to the letting agent and to a solicitor.

Left without funds, the Centre simply cannot afford to take on the lease together with such a large and uncertain liability. We are thus in practice condemned to eviction, and our vital services are under threat. Meanwhile, the four trustees of the new 'trust' will keep the control of half a million pounds...

The Unemployed Workers Centre wants to continue to live. Proud of our activities and successes, we are now launching a 'Save the Centre' campaign and ask for help and support from anybody who does not want us to be closed down or ruined.

***The workers and volunteers of Brighton
Unemployed Workers Centre***