

TO VACATE STROUD SUB. ROOMS

*Stroud
Journal*

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News Heard "With Dismay"

URBAN COUNCIL BLAMED

THE affairs of the Stroud Community Association, which has operated in the Subscription Rooms for the past 17 years, are to be wound up at the end of this month.

This decision was taken at a meeting of members of the Association, held on July 20, when the action of Stroud U.D.C. in refusing to negotiate a new lease with the Association was condemned.

Putting a resolution to which the meeting unanimously agreed, Mr. J. N. Comben said, "I feel the U.D.C. must be shown up in their attitude." He was sure the meeting only accepted the position with full condemnation of the U.D.C., while appreciating the help of the County Council.

About 40 people were present at the meeting over which Mr. T. H. Mercer, chairman and treasurer of the Association, presided. He was

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About 40 people were present at the meeting over which Mr. T. H. Mercer, chairman and treasurer of the Association, presided. He was supported by Miss S. Eggleston (warden), Mr. F. E. Bennett (association secretary), Mr. F. W. Allen, the County's assistant education officer for Further Education, Mr. F. W. Dawson, the County Valuer, and Major J. Gwynne, of the Gloucestershire Community Council.

IN SPLINTS

Outside, the building was in splints as workmen set about the task of renovating much of the exterior.

All sections of the Community Association were represented, those present including dancers (there were no youngsters), chess, badminton and table tennis players, radio club members, Stroud Garden Club members, and a good contingent from the S.V.C.C. Choir.

At the commencement of the meeting, after he had welcomed those present, Mr. Mercer gave a statement in which he said that the meeting had been called to consider the resolution of the Association council, passed at a meeting on June 5, that if proposals made at that date to the clerk to Stroud U.D.C., were not acceptable to the U.D.C., then there would be no alternative but to wind up the affairs of the Association.

Negotiations had been going on between the U.D.C., the Association council, and the County Valuer, who had been advising on behalf of the Gloucestershire County Council since the beginning of March.

The sub-committee who had been acting on behalf of the U.D.C. met the chairman of the County Education Committee, Major P. D. Birchall, the Chief Education Officer, Mr. W. R. Watkin, the County Valuer, and himself, said Mr. Mercer.

NO AGREEMENT

It was on March 14 when it was apparent, from what Mr. John said, that the U.D.C., wished to increase the rent to some figure in the neighbourhood of £5-600. After a long discussion no agreement was reached.

Major Birchall had pointed out at the meeting that leases of Community Centres were now always made by the centres themselves with the backing of the County Council but not with the County Council directly,

"A SAD DAY"

At Monday's meeting of the County Education Committee it was decided to support an application from the Stroud Hill Community Association to the Ministry of Education for grant aid for the building of a community hall, the total cost of which would be £5,272.

Major P. D. Birchall, chairman, referred to the Stroud Community Centre and said it was regrettable that it should be wound up. There had been a great deal of misunderstanding and a great deal of difficulty. The Stroud Urban Council were adamant on making the County Council tenants. The Centre had now held a meeting and decided to wind-up their affairs.

"It is a sad day", was the chairman's final comment.

as the tenant. This was the case with the Stroud Sub. Rooms lease which had now expired.

"Although this was not at all acceptable to the sub-committee of the U.D.C., Mr. John finally agreed to accept the Stroud Community Association as the direct tenant and this was the first proposal which was suggested should be included in any new lease by the clerk of the U.D.C., in a letter on April 10 to the County Valuer," Mr. Mercer explained.

He added that at the March meeting he had suggested to the sub-committee that the most the Association could afford in increased rent was £100, bringing it up to £435. This was due to the Association's financial position.

But this was not accepted as being anything like enough. Later in submitting draft proposals to the County Valuer, the clerk to the U.D.C. suggested that one of the bases to an agreement to a new lease should be an annual rental of £435 which had already been mentioned by Mr. Mercer and refused.

"MOST DIFFICULT"

"During the weeks following up to the present time—the negotiations

(Continued on Page 4)