

The fight for repairs continues

BBSK Residents Association, are continuing work on the maintenance issue.

In keeping with BBSK's strategy of forcing Council to do all repairs by flooding the rent office with complaints, many streets have taken complaint sheets back to the rent office for the second time around.

After complaint sheets had been lodged for the first time about seven months ago, follow-up work revealed that Council had responded to a small percentage of complaints.

Most of the repairs done by Council in response to the complaint sheets were of the minor sort.

Major repairs such as leaking roofs, rusted window frames, rotten doors and faulty elect-

rical wiring are still being neglected.

At the end of last year, Council announced that it would use R500 000 gained from the sale of Bloemhof Flats in District Six for the maintenance of houses.

However, there is no evidence that this money is being used to repair houses at all.

In a letter to BBSK, Council claimed that this money would only be used to repair houses into which new tenants would be moving.

Before the new tenants moved into the house, Council would accept responsibility for doing whatever repairs were needed.

However, after the tenant had signed the new lease he would then be responsible for all maintenance himself.

BBSK rejects the new lease provision on maintenance and Council's claims that they have no funds for maintenance.

At successful street meetings held before and after complaints were lodged at the rent office, tenants not only expressed their anger at Council's slow response, but also their determination to go back to the rent office again and again until their demands were attended to.

After going back to the rent office for the second time, Council has speeded up its response.

In Orchid Crescent, Silvertown, for instance, Council came to do most of the repairs last month.

DESPITE the fear of an outbreak of cholera in the area the Kewtown drains are still in a sorry state.

Two years ago there was a public outcry in Kewtown against the state of the drains outside the flats.

According to one doctor's report the dirty, stagnant water could lead to an outbreak of cholera.

The Council responded by sending workers to clear the drains. The water was pumped out and swept away.

However, nothing was done about the state of the drains.

It is obvious that these drains are old and neglected and in a sad state of disrepair.

Through a survey conducted by the Kewtown Residents Association recently the following facts have been brought to light by the residents who say:

- Many drains have been blocked for as long as they can re-

Health problems caused by blocked drains

- The dirty stagnant water has an unhealthy smell.

- Many children play in or near the water - this causes sores and various skin problems and other illnesses.

- The council sweeps the water away but does nothing about fixing the broken drains.

The blocked drains and filthy water that goes with it is but one of the problems that contribute to the unhealthy conditions under which people have to live in Kewtown.

Among other things the rusted window frames, poor lighting on the stairs, the old and

rusty baths are all problems with which the people are faced.

Many house meetings have been conducted since the survey was done and the following points were raised:

- It is the Council's responsibility to fix the drains.

- A delegation would be elected to see the chief medical health officer of the Council.

- An education programme on health should be launched in the area.

- Ever since the houses have been built, some forty years ago the rent has included a fee for maintenance.

It is common know-

ledge that very little maintenance repairs have been done, that the drains, electricity and the baths are in a bad state of disrepair.

- For many tenants in Kewtown the average income is R250 a month. Many are either pensioners or widows who receive grants.

Tenants therefore cannot keep pace with the staggering rise in the cost of living let alone burden themselves with added expenses.

The KRA maintains that this programme can only bear fruit with the full participation of all the residents concerned and the assistance of other progressive organisations.

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