

THE VITAL MEETING

Despite the preparation and rehearsals, there were many trembling hands, knocking knees and fluttering tummies on the evening of the 13th of November. There were a few apologies, but all invited groups were well represented, especially aspiring politicians!

We began by carefully placing ourselves beside each guest within the circle of chairs. After a welcome from our President, Sandra, we invited all present to introduce themselves and to explain their interest in the establishment of a community centre in Kingston. We asked for constructive ideas about how to achieve our objectives. As people made suggestions, we were very pleased to be able to demonstrate how effective we had been. One alderman advised, "First, you must write a constitution". We replied, "We've done that." Another followed with, "The next step is becoming incorporated", to which we could reply, "We're doing that." Many guests were genuinely surprised at the level of organisation we had already achieved. Dropping their condescending attitudes, they complimented us on our enthusiasm and efforts so far, and offered support.

One of the most important outcomes of this meeting was the increased confidence with which K.E.N.G members and supporters were able to deal with authority figures. We realised that politicians, government officials and journalists are people like ourselves with jobs to do, and this has made consequent negotiations with such people much easier. As well as gaining in confidence, we began to see the Community Centre as a real possibility rather than just a dream, and we were even more determined to succeed. All the hard work had paid off. As a result of this public meeting, K.E.N.G gained widespread local recognition and respect, and the group was strengthened for the tough times that lay ahead.