

Bring these children to Britain, says protest 'picket'

SUPPORTERS of Mrs Anwar Ditta picketed Rochdale Conservative Association headquarters on Saturday to campaign for three children she claims to be hers to be reunited with her in this country.

The Home Office has decided to give Mrs Ditta's appeal priority. The date of the hearing has not yet been fixed and, according to the Home Office, it depends on the "local position" and the decision of the UK Immigrants' Advisory Committee.

The 50 demonstrators had chosen the Tory office because, said an organiser, it was a "symbol of a policy which broke up families and caused misery to people in Britain and abroad."

The three children who have been refused entry to Britain are now in Pakistan.

Mrs Ditta, aged 25, of 127 Crawford Street, Rochdale, has campaigned for five years to get them to the UK.

She was born in Birmingham and brought up in Rochdale. She married Mr Shuja Ud Din in Pakistan. In 1975 Mrs Ditta and her husband returned to Rochdale to find work and a home. The children were refused entry on the grounds that the couple had

not established that they were the parents.

Mrs Ditta says she has birth certificates, medical records and photographs to prove that the children are her own. Members of the Anwar Ditta Defence Committee claim that the children have been refused entry because they are black.

Mrs Ditta said: "There are plenty of people in Britain who could prove that they are my children, but no one has asked them."

Councillor Bill Collinson, chairman of Rochdale Constituency Labour Party, said that the party gave full support to Mrs Ditta's case. It was outrageous that the Government should keep the family apart, he said.

Rochdale Labour Party has given £20 to the defence committee and branches are being asked to give more.

Councillor Edward Collins, the Conservative leader of Rochdale Council, declined to comment about the demonstration.

A second demonstration was held in Manchester later on Saturday in which defence committee members marched to the Immigration Office to hand in a 3,000-signature petition.

Mrs Ditta will address a public meeting at the Champness Hall, later this month, and a demonstration will be held on 1 March.



MRS ANWAR DITTA with her daughter, three-year-old Samera and some of her supporters, demonstrating outside Rochdale Conservative Association HQ on Saturday. (77658)

'Give us the money' joke gives shopkeeper a fright

A PRACTICAL joke by two men who pretended to hold up a corner shop in Castleton backfired when police caught up with them.

The men walked into the shop at 36 Newchurch Street on Friday night as owner Mrs Linda Doherty, aged 30, served a customer.

Mrs Doherty said: "I was terrified when one of the men said 'give me the money'. He was holding what looked like a gun but I later found out it was only a cigarette lighter. They appeared to have been drinking heavily and they

the men were joking and left the shop after she had been served.

Mrs Doherty said: "The men bought some goods, paid for them and left. It was only when they had gone that I realised it was a practical joke.

"Before Barbara left one of them turned to her and said: 'Who wants to be killed first?' I was absolutely petrified because you see things differently when you are on the side of the counter with the money."

The police were called and they went to see two men who live locally. They

Tories elect new chairman

MR GEOFFREY Greenhalgh of Wardle, is the new chairman of Heywood and Royton Union of Conservative Clubs.

He replaces Mr Harry Howarth, of Heywood, whose two-year term ended on Saturday at the union's annual meeting at Wardle Conservative Club.

The Heywood and Royton Union, embracing 14 clubs, is affiliated to the Lancashire Federation of Conservative Clubs.

Mr Peter Morgan was replaced as president by Mr W