

# **Borough Councillor's Missive. March 2010**

## **The Diary.**

Earlier in the month I received the Amended Claim by Sywell Aerodrome served at the Wellingborough County Court against both myself and the Council. We have over the last six months received numerous threats from the Company in regard to them having to "defend their position". I and some colleagues have gone through the so called claims. It is obvious and it is admitted by the Company that they have been breaking the law and also is in breach of the Management Agreement with the Forestry Commission indeed there are now serious questions as to the basic justification for this agreement anyway. The point here is, as the vast majority of people will be aware, that a lot of the time and work I do is as a **Ward Councillor**. I receive calls, e-mail etc from the people in the Ward and take any necessary action and contact any organisation either public or private as I see fit in order to resolve the issue. The Borough Council duties include formal committees and sub group work including external organisations all of whom are managed by Officers of WBC, CPRE or WNJPC et al. Officers rarely if ever manage Ward Councillor work for obvious reasons.

## **Council**

At the last Council meeting we had the difficult decision of voting to increase the Council tax base. The administration took the view that 2.9% would be as much as could be justified. Yet amazingly the Opposition wanted to see a much greater increase! I was one of those on your behalf who spoke against such nonsense. The motion was carried with a very substantial majority.

## **Development**

Like all Councils in this area we have been foisted by this Governments ideology of massive residential development. I know it has been very difficult for some of our Officers who have to contend with statutory requirements on the one hand and on the other a Conservative administration at WBC. This conflict is very disturbing in that in terms of development we are absolutely opposed to these very large SUEs (Sustainable Urban Extensions) and there is no doubt that there is little justification for them. So part of this month I have been reading and inwardly digesting the SSPD (Site Specific Proposals Development plan) this is a 190 page document full of all aspects of development including employment, retail, transport, schools and hospitals etc but guess what, there is no money for arterial roads or any other major infrastructure other than the Isham Bypass. The villages are also considered in the light of development. Sywell, Ecton and Mears Ashby have all got conservation areas which will remain sacrosanct, outside of these areas there may be room for some minor infill and so called windfall development but it will be very small in scale. The SSPD was finally discussed at the Development Committee meeting and in front of the largest gathering of the public in the Chamber for many a Committee meeting. It was decided to appoint a Working Group to go through all of the details and report back in June by which time we hope to have a new Government in place!

## **West Northants Joint Planning Committee**

We are now moving towards creating a Core Spatial Strategy (CSS) and by putting the most important elements in place this will enable significant control of all development within the area. Our friends in Overstone will be particularly interested to note that apart from the clamour of the Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA) (mentioned last month) there is very little appetite for significant development in the Overstone area within the group. However the CSS has to be approved by the Secretary of State and if this lot are re-elected then it will be a completely new ball game.

## **Wellingborough North Development (3,000 homes etc near Redhill Grange)**

The Secretary of State's final decision has now been publicised, he has allowed the Appeal but will not compel WBC to enter a Unilateral Undertaking (to include the land owned by WBC within the appeal site). This is a great result as WBC owns a significant amount of land around the total site and it will not be included as long as there is a Conservative administration in Wellingborough. The result

was further enhanced by the decision on costs, the SoS stated that the Council had not behaved unreasonably and therefore he would not award costs against WBC. My understanding is that the Appeal costs by the Appellant were in the region of £1 million!!.

### **Sywell Aerodrome**

Last month I reported that a Planning Application for the Approach Lighting System had been made to the Council by the company. This application has now been withdrawn. There are very serious implications to the position taken by the company, that in effect because it was specifically excluded by the Secretaries of States Decision, meant that it had to be applied for! There is a somewhat perverse logic here, perhaps someone out there can explain it to me. We should not be deluded into believing this application is "dead" but for sure the CAA were not very complimentary in regard to statements made being attributed to them by the Company.

I have however been busy drafting the Terms of Reference for a new Aviation Committee within WBC and hopefully will publish them in next month's Missive.

### **Sywell Aerodrome Joint Consultative Committee**

The Committee will meet on 20th April at 18:30 in Sywell Village Hall. This is a public meeting and hopefully there will be a public Q&A. As a result of decisions taken last month the Constitution is being re-drafted, I hope to have sight of it very soon and once we have good executives the Committee will be seen to be working and complying with its Statutory obligations which it clearly does not at the moment.

As ever if you have any queries please contact me and remember, I cannot help you if I do not know of your problems.

*Jim Bass*

*(Councillor for Sywell, Ecton and Mears Ashby, Wellingborough Borough Council)*

e-mail: jim.bass@sky.com

Tel+44 1604 647594 Mob +44 7711 103816

This Missive can now be seen on the following web sites:

[www.ectonvillage.co.uk](http://www.ectonvillage.co.uk)

[www.mearsashbyparishcouncil.com](http://www.mearsashbyparishcouncil.com)