

Borough Councillor's Missive January 2012

The Diary.

First of all Happy New Year, we had a great Christmas with our family topped off by a super New Year's Eve Party at Overstone Village Hall. Those folk from Overstone know how to party, bring your own and all!!!

In the early part of December I met Peter Simpson Managing Director of AWA, together with Chris Heaton-Harris our M.P. You may recall that BCW had initiated the Liaison Working Group to address the concerns of odours in the surrounding area including Ecton. Peter, not surprisingly, was extremely positive in his attitude towards the working group and has agreed to have the systems causing the odours reviewed and modified as necessary. See below.

Development

If ever there was a revelation it was at the January meeting of the Development Committee. Most of you will never have heard of Bee Bee Developments, this company appear to have earned some notoriety before I joined the Council. My early contact with this organisation was in 2008 when they applied to build some 1500 homes etc at the site called Wellingborough North. For this application the whole Council became the regulatory Planning Committee. The application was thrown out but on leaving the chamber that night the MD of the company, who was standing in the exit doorway said loudly to a number of us "that was a big mistake and will cost you". Now most Councillors don't like being threatened but some of us would have reacted but we waited until the application went to Appeal. At least six of us made representations to the Inspector and mine was in relation to the finances and background of the applicant. The Inspector allowed the Appeal because it complied with the Labour Government's plan to make Northamptonshire a massive building site! However BCW owned a piece of "ransom" land and we refused to release it to the developer. So he was stymied and has been ever since. Nevertheless he acquired a piece of land on the eastern side of the railway station such that it stopped the development of the WEAST site. So BCW in turn decided to begin the process to compulsory purchase the land, this could mean that we would pay a fraction of his cost price to acquire the land. So this month the MD of Bee Bee came to Development to plead forgiveness and apologise for his behaviour over the past years. Truly amazing and most humiliating for him, it must have taken a lot of courage, not sure however if it will make any difference. The other major issue in Development is the site of Wilby Grange this is the area on the right hand side as you approach the Wilby Roundabout on the A45 from the Sainsburys end. The applicant Hampton would like to build hundreds of homes and a Business Park together with sports and other facilities. The Committee rejected this plan as it considers we already have enough building approvals to satisfy the homes requirements.

Planning

Two applications were refused this month one in Mears Ashby and other in Sywell.

Billing Sewage Treatment Plant Liaison Working Group

This month we had the third meeting of this group this followed the meeting with Peter Simpson as stated earlier. The meeting was attended by some twenty people and was a test of my chairing skills! It followed an early morning radio interview with Radio Northampton to discuss the issues. A full schedule of measures has been drawn up and hopefully they will resolve the problems once and for all.

We hope that AWA will have all of the remedial work in place by early April, no doubt this should turn out to be a godsend to our friends around the sewage plant but the "acid" test is when the processes are tested in the summer months with the warmer weather. Let's hope we don't have to hold our noses ever again. For more technical details please go to my web site.

Sywell Aerodrome Working Group

This working group met again in January. It was supposed to be to review the formal documentation but it turned out to be a fiasco as some are convinced that the term "all weather covering to the existing 03/21 runway" means to put the runway somewhere else! Officers have real concerns as I believe they feel "hoodwinked" by the company sometime between 2005 and the start of the Public Inquiry 2006. I was not involved with the Council at that time but the evidence of the conclusion by the Inspector is compelling. The Ancient Woodland was discussed at length, the Officers once again were surprised that the whole area was flattened the majority of it being ploughed and disced, in essence on a misnomer. They had obviously not realised that, according to the Management Agreement the company could "flatten" the area every three years. The Company admit that it was wrong in stating it was a CAA requirement to clear fell the area, this of course follows the statement by the Minister of State but of course the damage was already done. That however should not mean that they should be allowed to destroy the site every three years!

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

Or visit the web site and lodge your comments: <http://jamesbass.yourcllr.com/>

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The full Missive can be viewed on web sites: www.ectonvillage.co.uk

www.mearsashbyparishcouncil.com ,