

Borough Council Matters

1. A blow for democracy

It is not everyday that, as an elected member of a Borough Council, you get an opportunity to make a decision that potentially really can make a difference. That is usually left to county councillors or members of the government.

Such an opportunity did arise on 4 February 2009 when, at an Extraordinary meeting of the Council, we considered a planning application for permission to build 3,000 dwellings on land to the north of Wellingborough and the application was refused.

This is a massive development which borders roughly Redhill Grange, The Harrowdens and Hardwick. It would take in some listed farm buildings, old bridleways and tracks, hedges that are thousands of years old, acres of arable farm land and destroy the habitat of vast quantities of wildlife. It would also significantly alter the aspect of the village of Little Harrowden and the people who live there.

There was no consideration of where all these people were going to work. Worst of all there was no consideration of the views of the people who live in the area or in the wider borough. There is already a very large development to the east of the town which is way overdue to start. Not a brick has been laid, just two grey sheds built on the side of the A45.

I submit that Wellingborough does not need this expansion and I was pleased to be able to vote against it along with the majority of my colleagues. As I voted I was mindful of the threat to our communities in Great Doddington and Wilby for potential development between Wilby Way and Cut Throat Lane. Imagine how we would fight to preserve our own green space and environment.

The developers have lodged an appeal which will be heard by the Planning Inspectorate and the final decision could well be made by the government minister who made the original decision to target Wellingborough as an area for expansion. Having listened to all of the submissions from local residents and the concerns that were expressed at the meeting it would be a travesty if the appeal is successful.

What would it do for local democracy?

2. Privatisation of the Royal Mail

Several people have asked me about the Government proposals to sell off the Royal Mail. My immediate reaction is why would anyone want to try and sell off part of their business during one of the biggest recessions we have seen for many years?

We know that there is some mystery around the pension fund deficit and how this will be funded. There is no detail about how this problem will be resolved in the Bill which is still to come before the House of Commons.

The Post Office in Great Doddington has been lost and now they want to tamper with a real public treasure. The post man who delivers my mail is fantastic. He is both cheerful and helpful He will leave parcels with me to hold for someone who is out and ask someone to take in my mail when necessary. He certainly does not deserve this uncertainty around his employment or pension and neither do all the other post men and women.

Like many people, I am dubious why the government have chosen now to try to rush through this legislation without proper scrutiny or consultation. If you are concerned or would like to ask any questions then you can contact our Member of Parliament, Peter Bone, who is very active on this issue. You can contact him on 01933 279343.

3. Diary Dates

There are a couple events looming which are worth noting:

Wellingborough Rugby Club is holding a “Festival of Rugby” over two days in July to promote rugby football and sport in general within the local community. The event is being supported by the Borough Council and will benefit Children in Need and the Warwickshire and Northamptonshire Air Ambulance.

Admission to the event is free and provides a good opportunity to introduce your children to a great sport and take in some fresh air right on our own doorstep.

For further information please contact by e-mail enquiries@rugbyfestival.co.uk or call customer services at the Council on 229777.

Please also make a note of the Carnival & Party Weekend which this year takes place in Croyland Park on Saturday 4 July and Sunday 5 July.

Cllr Barry Graves
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Borough Council of Wellingborough