

# Frustration over parish plan delay

## Why Cllr quit the party whip

22/6/17



**MAIDENHEAD:** Cllr Claire Stretton (Ind Con, Boyn Hill) has confirmed to the Advertiser she will now serve as an Independent Conservative.

## Bray: Failure to appoint independent examiner criticised

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**SPEED READ:** Frustration over the progress of the Bray Parish Neighbourhood Plan has led the committee to take action to find their own external examiner.

FRUSTRATION has been expressed by the team behind Bray Parish Neighbourhood Plan (BPNP) at the lack of progress made.

The plan was submitted to the Royal Borough in October after five-and-a-half years of work.

It was drawn up by the community to help shape development in the area and will feed into the larger Borough Local Plan (BLP).

The council is now responsible for certain aspects of the plan including appointing an independent examiner and organising public consultation.

The plan's committee last met with the borough council on March 23, when they say it was decided that consultation on the neighbourhood plan would be triggered by placing an advert in the Advertiser.

Before this can happen the examiner needs to be appointed - but the committee is still waiting.

Steve Adams, chairman of the BPNP steering group, has been involved in creating the plan since its inception in 2011.

The 72-year-old said at the meeting in March they were told an examiner would be appointed within two weeks.

## No plan better than bad plan - and ours is awful

HAVING known Cllr Derek Wilson for some time I was disappointed to read he was reported as, in my view disrespectfully, calling objecting residents 'they', and also saying that there is 'no going back only forwards' on the seriously flawed BLP.

Even if the consultation period had been 12 months it appears to me our council would still have disregarded its residents' views. There will never be any realistic and meaningful consultation without some significant changes to the democratic process and leadership within RBWM.

There is no doubt the council has taken the easy options and continued almost 'lemming like' in the desire to appease central government. Surely in taking this path councillors cannot be at ease when subscribing to this massacre of the greenbelt.

Nobody disputes the need for housing but there has to be a balance of retaining green spaces and using a sensitive approach to planning.

Finally, in the words of our current local MP 'no deal is better than a bad deal', so am I therefore correct to assume that 'no plan is better than a bad plan'...and that Maidenhead evidently has, at present, a very bad plan indeed!

When this did not happen the group sought advice from an independent QC.

"It is the local authority's duty to work with the parish and the neighbourhood planning group in agreeing who the examiner will be," said Steve.

He says on May 15 he emailed the borough's planning department with a suggested criteria for the examiner.

When he did not hear

from them he got back in touch on June 8.

In an email to the borough's head of planning Jenifer Jackson, Steve said: "In the absence of any response from you, and setting to one side for the moment the gross discourtesy inherent in such arrogant disregard by officers of councillors' express wishes, we accept that in the absence of any response you are content with these criteria and

accept them."

The Royal Borough told the Advertiser progressing the BPNP had been delayed due to a purdah during the general election period.

A spokesman said: "In addition, the council had wanted to check the procedural matter without protest on Monday asking if I would be the parish council, which included taking legal advice."

A meeting between the two parties was held on Tuesday.

"The council will now wait for the parish council to respond to the outcome of that meeting," the spokesman added.

## Time councillors made a change at the top

I AM sure I am not the only person in the borough to be saddened and alarmed that such a long standing, stalwart Tory councillor, Charles Hollingsworth, who has contributed so much to the local community over many years, has found it necessary to resign the Conservative whip (Advertiser, last week).

I hope his action is not in vain and other Conservative councillors will quickly follow suit to force the resignation of Cllr Dudley and his supporters who seem Hell bent on ignoring the wishes of their constituents.

Cllr Dudley's indifference to constituents' wishes were evident many years ago when residents requested his support in determining the haul route for thousands of tons of toxic waste from the Badnells Pit development (now Boulters Meadow).

Unable to make direct contact with Cllr Dudley at his office I wrote to him on behalf of concerned residents and delivered it by hand to his home address.

The following morning I received an hysterical-telephone call from a very irate councillor remonstrating with me for having the cheek to invade his private space and demanding to know how I had obtained his address. When I pointed out to him it was published in the council news sheet, he calmed down. In the event, our MP Mrs May supported our concern and an alternative haul route was chosen. I'm not sure how these things work, but if enough Tory councillors make a stand against Cllr Dudley and his supporters, we could elect councillors who truly represent the people and pet projects like concreting over golf courses and building commercial buildings near the riverside at Boulters Lock - the only part of Maidenhead successive councils have not managed to ruin - could be quashed. Living in the riverside area (as opposed to your correspondent Mr Adkins, who does not live near the proposed development) I have witnessed the hordes of people who enjoy the beauty of riverside and like Mrs Foll, I wish to preserve this pleasant part of England.

Finally, may I thank the Maidenhead Advertiser for being the voice of the people once again when our elected representatives fail so miserably to do so.

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22/6/17

## Residents have ultimate weapon - they vote

I HAD the dubious pleasure of attending the extraordinary general meeting on Monday night. While, for the majority, the debate was passionate and reasoned, some councillors resorted to aggressive rhetoric which highlighted their arrogant and condescending approach to residents.

Cllr Grey blamed 'unrecognised groups for bullying councillors', these 'unrecognised groups' are residents associations, neighbourhood planning groups and local interest groups who give up their time freely and have been ignored entirely throughout this process.

Cllr Quick stated: 'The residents here need to accept they are in the minority', these are the residents who give up an evening to sit in sweltering conditions to listen to the Conservative group try to justify the unjustifiable.

Finally, and saving the best until last, Cllr Saunders pointing at the audience shouted 'I will not continue until you STOP THEM!'

The 'Them' that Cllr Saunders referred to are residents and most importantly they are voters and as Cllr Sharp quite rightly pointed out: 'These residents have the ultimate weapon, they vote'.

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