

Theydon Bois Action Group

PROTECTING THE VILLAGE OF THEYDON BOIS

18 June 2009

Councillor Cohen
Portfolio Holder for Legal and Estates
Epping Forest District Council
Civic Offices
High Street
Epping
Essex
CM16 4BZ.

Dear Councillor Cohen

Theydon Bois Action Group (TBAG) would like to take this opportunity to congratulate you on your new responsibilities and to introduce ourselves to you as the member with responsibility for Planning Enforcement.

TBAG was formed, at the suggestion of the Parish Council, during the summer of 2005. Our primary focus at that time was the excessive level of demolition waste being imported and dumped at Parsonage Golf, Blunts Farm. We now campaign on a number of issues primarily concerned with inappropriate development on the Green Belt locally.

We are sure you are aware that the Enforcement Notices, ENF/195/06, issued to Blunts Farm Estates Limited should be complied with by 17th October 2009. Since they were issued 20 months ago no progress has been made to ensure that they are complied with by the relevant date. Stephan Solon visited the site in early May 2009 and confirmed that *'no work at all has taken place on the ground.'*

At a meeting specifically arranged to discuss this issue, attended by Eleanor Laing, EFDC, TBPC, and TBAG on 26th September 2008, it was suggested that EFDC could seek an injunction against individuals, which could result in an unlimited fine and possible custodial sentence of those individuals. It was also stated that EFDC would prepare as if they were going to prosecute and start

gathering the necessary information in collaboration with the Environment Agency and from other available channels. It was indicated that EFDC felt that it would be possible to comply with the Enforcement Notices on the Blunts Farm site within a six-month period and that the owners had been given two years to comply.

There are now only four months left and it would be easy to assume therefore that there is now not enough time left to comply with the notices.

On 22 April 2008 a report was given by Cllr. Grigg to EFDC Cabinet that stated that "*officers were actively seeking compliance as soon as possible*". On 18th April 2009 TBAG asked Cllr Grigg what progress has been made on compliance, and an officer confirmed that in his opinion they do not have enough time to comply.

Can TBAG please ask what actions are being taken to bring a timely conclusion to this situation? Sir John Harman the Chairman of The Environment Agency said "*I wouldn't want to see the operator get away with this abuse without suffering substantial financial loss.*" These "unscrupulous developers" have, according to Sir John, made approximately £18 million avoiding Landfill Tax polluting a green field, Green Belt site. They have spent 20 months doing nothing. It is time that the people of Theydon Bois saw some action.

Yours sincerely

Theydon Bois Action Group