

Report from District Councillor, Peter Terrington, 4th Mar. 2013

Coach/Lorry parking, Polka Rd, Wells: Application for a filling station is with officers, awaiting a flood risk assessment. The Environment Agency is maintaining its objection in relation to groundwater protection. They have advised that it is their policy to object in principle to any new developments involving sub water table storage on Principal or Secondary Aquifers. The application is likely to be referred to the development Committee, by officers, with recommendation for approval.

Market Lane Development: I will be attending the site visit on 7th Mar. but will declare a personal interest as many of the objectors are personal friends, and in one case, a close family relation.

OTHER NEWS:

Enforcement Board Update: The Council's Annual Action Plan has set an annual target to reduce the number of empty homes by 40 from the base. The Enforcement Board is looking at the situation with Clarence House. The Board also monitors other empty properties and is looking into the situation with the Maryland Industrial Units.

Planning Peer Challenge: The Council has undertaken a review of its planning procedures by another local authority. The review involved officers and members. One point that arose, in discussion, was the surprise at the low take up, by town councils, of the opportunity to produce Neighbourhood Plans.

Community Right to Buy: The Community Right to Bid allows communities and parish councils to nominate buildings or land for listing by the local authority as an asset of community value (this can relate to both publicly and privately owned assets). An asset can be listed if its principal use furthers (or has recently furthered) your community's social well-being or social interests (which include cultural, sporting or recreational interests) and is likely to do so in the future. When a listed asset comes to be sold, a moratorium on the sale (of up to six months) may be invoked, providing local community groups with a better chance to raise finance, develop a business and to make a bid to buy the asset on the open market.

A number of community organisations can nominate land and buildings for inclusion on the list, and this includes Parish Councils. The Council will then consider if the nomination meets the relevant criteria and if not would be written to with an explanation provided. Those that are successful would be kept on a list of assets for 5 years. There is also an appeals process for landowners.

At this point in time it would be for the Town Council to identify the relevant assets and inform the Council. The appropriate guidance and paperwork is currently being drafted and I will be forwarded once it has been approved to enable organisations to make submissions.

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