

ED VAIZEY WRITES...

Despite the long Parliamentary recess, work has continued as usual. I am still dealing with a large volume of correspondence, and helping various constituents with their cases. Because Parliament is not sitting, there is no parliamentary business to report on.



I have pencilled in 16th October for a public meeting on the Anson Trust's proposals. I have no strong views on this issue, which is very much for Marcham residents, but I think I could help act as chairman of a meeting to allow every one to have their say in a reasonable fashion, hopefully clear the air, and perhaps find a way forward.

A few items of interest across the constituency. First, I was delighted to learn that the Government has ordered a public enquiry into the large reservoir that Thames Water want to build between Steventon and the Hanneys. Thames have already reduced the size of the proposed reservoir by a third, and delayed any possible start date until after 2014. I have long called for a public enquiry, and raised the issue in the House of Commons last November. It is the best way of exploring all the alternatives, as well as the actual need for this new water supply. My understanding is that the enquiry will commence in 2010.

Second, the incinerator proposed for Sutton Courtenay is coming to a head. There are two possible sites for an incinerator - Sutton Courtenay and Ardley in the north of the County. The County Council will choose a preferred bidder in September, and that will influence the choice of site, as each bidder has a preferred site. I have argued that there are much more modern alternatives to incineration, and called for the County to look at these before pressing ahead with an incinerator.

Third, I was interested to see that the Association of Train Operating Companies published a report listing a number of stations that could be re-opened, and included Wantage/Grove in their report. I am urgently seeking a meeting to explore their thinking, to see if this could become a real possibility.

In August, in my capacity as opposition culture spokesman, I issued a report on the decline in library attendance in the last few years across the country. This earned me my first appearance on the Today programme. The interview with Jim Naughtie went very well, until his co-presenter, Evan Davis, pointed out I was wearing my T-shirt back-to-front. Memo to self - don't get dressed in the dark next time.

ED VAIZEY, MP Wantage (Con)

MP'S SURGERY WITH ED VAIZEY

5.30-7.00pm, unless stated otherwise

25 Sept	Wantage , Civic Hall
9 Oct	Grove , Old Mill Hall, Old School Lane
23 Oct	Wallingford , Town Hall
Contact Ed Vaizey by	
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September 2009

REPORT FROM GARD

Most of those who are interested in the reservoir situation will now have heard that the Secretary of State for the Environment has decided that a Public Inquiry is to be held to examine the plans of Thames Water, with particular regard, in our area, to the proposal to build a massive reservoir. The Thames Water resources plan has been revised showing a delay of up to five years to their proposed start for a reservoir, and a reduction in size, but this leaves local land and property blighted, and the uncertainty of disruption is merely deferred. So the situation is really no further forward. A public Inquiry should resolve this.

GARD seeks the removal of the reservoir from the plan, as it cannot be justified even on Thames Water's revised demand figures once these have been corrected for several errors which boost their forecast demand. There are, in any case, if needed at reasonably short notice, far more economic and quicker to construct alternatives to the proposed reservoir. These include water reuse (from several different sewage treatment works near London) and well researched Severn to Thames water transfer options. These alternatives have been formally proposed by GARD but none have been properly and conscientiously analysed or fairly compared by Thames Water against their favoured project in spite of EU legislation which demands proper and public assessments of all alternatives. To our satisfaction the Environment Agency has now agreed to examine at least some of GARD's alternative proposals more closely.

The process of a Public Inquiry is long and expensive and the Inquiry will not take place until well into next year. Thames Water has deep pockets and will employ people with smooth tongues to represent them. GARD will be discussing our best approach to the Inquiry with CPRE, and liaising with others including the Vale of the White Horse District Council which has a key role to play as the statutory local government consultee in its capacity as the local Planning Authority.

Thanks to the work of our consultant, the generosity of a sponsor, and support of members of the GARD Committee and others, we feel that much progress has been made to get this far. Our role has been to challenge the technical detail provided by Thames Water. Much essential work has been done to defeat an expensive, unnecessary, commercially motivated project. Unfortunately there is plenty more for us to do!

NICK THOMPSON Hon Chairman

INCINERATOR UPDATE

The incinerator planning process is coming to a climax and there are two very important developments, which local people should be aware of:

1. WRG has submitted the third version of its application and the public consultation will run until 14 Sep. This is not reflected on our web site or that of the County Council yet. That will take a few days, but both will include this by the time your September editions are circulated. Once again we need to get as many letters of objection to OCC as possible.
2. Extraordinarily an extra meeting of the OCC Cabinet has been called on 7 Sep to decide on a "preferred bidder" to deal with Oxfordshire's waste. Quite what the OCC Cabinet is up to is not clear, as that approach would seem to prejudice the outcome of the planning process. Hopefully your Parish Councils are aware and are making some enquiries on OCC's rationale.

A public meeting is to be held on Fri 25 Sep at 7.30 in Sutton Courtenay Village Hall, with Ed Vaizey MP and Stewart Lilly, the new County Councillor for Harwell & Sutton Courtenay.

ROBIN DRAPER