

4 Church Lane,

Pagham PO214NS.

1st March, 2018.

Dear Mr Easton,

Planning Application P/140/16/OUT

In late September I had a very helpful letter from the Minister for Communities and Local Government explaining the responsibilities of local authorities with regard to the National Planning Policy Framework. He clearly set out local authority's obligations with regard to the Local Plan and the Localism Act. My experience is that Arun District Council have displayed little vigour in utilising local views and opinions as required by statute.

When Hanbury Properties submitted their application to build 400 houses in Pagham Road they appended a habitat report prepared by an organisation called Ecology Solutions. This report declared that, 'despite detailed surveys' they had not observed brent geese or wading birds using the proposed site. I am an experienced bird watcher and have been a WEBS surveyor at Pagham Harbour for 34 years. My patch being the Pagham Road fields, Church Lane and the North Wall of Pagham Harbour. I have seen brent geese on an annual basis and in high numbers using the Pagham Road site and knew therefore that the findings of Ecology Solutions were incorrect.

Subsequently the RSPB and the Sussex Ornithological Society submitted written objections to the above application and both confirmed the use of the site by brent geese. In partnership with SOS and PAGAM I undertook to carry out a survey of the householders in Pagham Road who overlooked the proposed site. It was hoped that this survey would demonstrate how important the site was for foraging brent geese. It was a simple format – how long have you lived here, how regularly have you seen brent geese using the site and in what sort of numbers. The results were overwhelming. 97% of local residents had seen the geese on an annual basis. Length of residence ranged from 5 years to 47 years, giving an average of 21 years. The survey asked no questions about the proposed housing development. It was appended to

the written objection made by the SOS in the expectation that it clearly reflected the views of local people. The survey was in fact a quite unique document for Arun planners as it was the only available document that clearly showed the extensive usage made of the site by brent geese.

During the winter of 2016/17 and this winter no geese have been recorded on the site which is hardly surprising. For the first time in local memory bird scarers have been used on the site and the land has been heavily ploughed and left unplanted. Clearly a cynical move by the developers/landowner that has successfully left the site totally inhospitable for foraging geese.

During the representations to the Inspector in 2017 the survey referred to above was dismissed by the developers as 'biased and unscientific'. This was predictable.

What was not predictable was the Arun response to the Inspector's interim report. These are contained in the Technical Note PELP33 Appendix A. Paragraph 3. A precis of these comments is that records generated by members of the public are valuable however the household data in the householder survey was not derived from a recognised monitoring programme and as such lacked scientific vigour. What an easy way to avoid acknowledging local views. To use words almost the same as those used by the developers. How condescending.

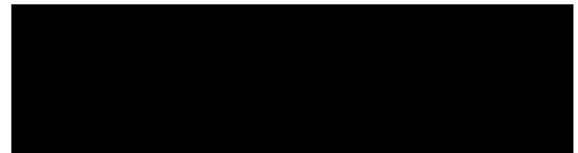
There is nothing in the Minister's letter that states local opinions and views should be backed by recognised scientific data. Hundreds of local people have written objecting to the above planning application will they be dismissed because they 'lack scientific vigour'?

It concerns local people greatly that Arun appear to support the developers who are based in Bristol, the developers ecologists who are based in Worcestershire and a Natural England officer who is based in Crewe. What about the views of RSPB, SOS, Sussex Wildlife Trust and local people.

I request you to quickly arrange for one of your assistants to provide me with a recognisable scientific monitoring programme so that I may carry out the survey all over again. I suspect that the results will probably be the same again but this time Arun will need to pay heed to local views.

Will you please do this within the time limits set by the Arun protocol for replying to letters and also ensure that a copy of my letter and your reply is made available to the Inspector. Once I have a copy of the suggested monitoring programme I will undertake to complete the survey within one month of receiving it.

Yours Sincerely,

A large black rectangular box redacting the signature of J.D. Weston.

J.D. Weston

David Easton, Esq
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Maltravers Road,
Littlehampton BN17 5EF.

Copy to Mrs D. Hall