

Telford town Park - THE TRUTH

Contributed by Steve Wilson
Thursday, 30 October 2008
Last Updated Thursday, 30 October 2008

Councillor Keith Austin has called upon Council Leader Andrew Eade to finally come clean about the fiasco over Telford Town Park.

As Residents, we must agree with him and again Telford Council Watch calls upon Council leader Councillor Andrew Eade to finally deliver on his promise to deliver the open and honest Council he constantly refers to.

This promise formed an integral part of the Conservative Campaign in 2007 which saw them take over the administration from the Labour Party, since then, we regret that we have seen nothing more than a bunch of failed promises from the Conservative Leader.

The Telford Journal ran the Story headed

“FURORE OVER COUNCILLOR”

The article on the front page covers the issue of Councillor Allen being responsible for the policy of checking “Lone Adults” in the Town Park, despite Senior Officer Ron Odunaiya saying on BBC Radio

“This Policy had been in force for 9 years”

And

“In that time 9 million people had used the Town Park with only 5 people being approached”

The article goes onto say

A spokesman for Telford & Wrekin Council denied the allegations.

“There is no investigation of any specific individual around the Town Park Issue”

Concerns were also expressed about a sum of £50,000 being pledged to South Telford Rights of Way and earlier articles in the Shropshire Star said that information had been leaked to Parish Councillors John & Pat Smart.

In a post on the TCW Forum in the Park area, John Franklyn accurately predicted the outcome of this investigation saying that Councillor Allen would be placed on the back benches and the Conservative Group would retain its political majority.

This evening in the absence of John Franklyn, Telford Council Watch representatives were passed a series of printed emails

One email dated 20th October 2008 says

“I need your help as I believe I am being "Set up" by Wellings. It is to do with the "penquins in the park" incident. I was interviewed on BBC Radio Shropshire on 9th-10th September.”

And goes to say

“I am to give evidence to an internal inquiry (I requested an external, unbiased one but this was denied).”

This clearly displays that an investigation was actually on going.

Emails continue to talk about a CD Rom that had been given to Councillor Allen that should’ve contained various information. The CD Rom had been wrongly formatted by Jenny Mcgreger of the Public Relations Department. Councillor Denis Allen initially requested a transcript of the BBC Radio but was informed it would be too difficult to have one but one had been issued to a person referred to as Steve Jenkins. When Jenny Mcgregor was tackled about the wrongly

formatted disk, she agreed to issue a typed Transcript.

A further email issued by Jenny Marriott goes onto say

From: Marriott, Jenny

Sent: 23 October 2008 09:14

To: Costello, Mary; Allen, Denis, Cllr; Clarke, Ken

Subject: Town Park Policy Review

When: 31 October 2008 10:00-11:30 (GMT) Greenwich Mean Time : Dublin, Edinburgh, Lisbon, London.

Where: Ken's office

Dear Denis,

Please find attached the terms of reference for the above review.

<< File: Town Park Internal Review TOR final.doc >>

This meeting is to discuss your role.

If you have any questions about the meeting please do not hesitate to contact me or Mary Costello.

Jenny

Councillor Denis Allen replied to this email sending a CC to Mary Costello and Ken Clarke

Dear Jenny, I note your last sentence with interest as you have not answered the two questions I put to you in my response to your last e-mail. You will recall that I was concerned at the invidious position you have been placed in and about your suitability (knowledge and training) for the task. On 15th September the Cabinet agreed that the inquiry had to be an external one to ensure objectivity as the Senior Employee and a Director are directly involved in condoning the actions in the Park and the Press releases and letters issued. It was only on 3rd October that I was informed that this decision had been overturned by persons and for reasons unknown. I do not understand the Leader's impuissance in this matter for, using Aristotle's philosophy I can only deduce, that the change is in order to avoid objectivity and introduce subjectivity to enable the involvement of the Senior Employee and the Director to be played down. Please have the good manners to answer me this "If paid staff of the Borough Council ignore questions put to them by democratically elected Councillors; why should a Cabinet Member bother to turn up to answer questions put by the same paid staff?" If you would like to make this "Town Park Internal Review" a little less of a charade, you could borrow a "Police & Criminal Evidence Act" tape machine from Trading Standards so that we could both have a tape of what is actually said. If you do not do this then I am afraid that, as previous experience has taught me that few Telford & Wrekin Officers are to be trusted, I shall not attend this farcical event.

Clearly, there is a lot more to this issue that the residents of Telford & Wrekin are not be told about and we must now demand the open and honest council we were promised.

A great number of people have been involved in the Telford Town Park fiasco and many people believe that Councillor Denis Allen has been used as a scapegoat with others being conveniently let off the hook.

Questions

As Director of Community Services why has Ron Odunaiya been let off the hook as he clearly played a vital role in this?

Council Leader Andrew Eade has constantly backed Councillor Allen over the Town Park issues dating back to 2007 and the debacle over the consultation which saw residents having to go through the FOI procedure to get a set of minutes to a meeting they had attended. So why has Councillor Eade been prepared to sacrifice his colleague Councillor Allen?

Why has Telford & Wrekin Council got no CRB or List99 check information on the 25 organisations it allows to use the Town Park?

Will Councillor Andrew Eade finally issue the apology to the Wrekin Stop War group who Telford and Wrekin council treated so badly?

Telford and Wrekin Council Watch now formerly call upon Council Leader Andrew Eade to come into the open and give residents a full and frank explanation of the genuine concerns surrounding Telford Town Park and once and for all deliver the open and honest Council he has promised.

John Franklyn has arranged a petition via the No.10 web site calling for this and we now urge all to sign it in our call for an open and honest Council.

The Petition can be signed at the following link.

<http://petitions.number10.gov.uk/CommunityPanel/>