

PLANNING

Group doesn't represent us all

There has been much published over the last few

weeks with regard objections to housing planning within Hampsthwaite village by the Hampsthwaite Action Group.

A very loud, but none the less minority group within the village, with the advantage of being backed financially by Hampsthwaite Parish Council using funds from the parish council precept paid for by all residents of the village whether they agree with the HAG objections or not.

I for one am not opposed to the proposals and indeed very much support them and consider they will bring much prosperity to the village both now and in the future for those growing up in the village and who would wish an opportunity to keep their roots here and not have to leave either to live and even work if they so wished.

It should not be forgotten that when the HAG movement chant and quote "Save Our Village" in their propaganda it is not "their" village alone. There are others who may support the proposals like myself or the majority who appear to be indifferent.

There was a meeting in the Hampsthwaite Memorial Hall on Tuesday, October 17 as you have reported which I attended.

It was advertised as a "public meeting" and indeed the invitation posted through my letterbox indicated the same as a public meeting.

It was attended by Coun Rebecca Burnett who I have to say gave a most informative presentation and also answered questions in a most positive, true and professional way. Putting Harrogate Borough Council's position on this matter excellently.

It transpired however that this was by no means a "public meeting" as all the questions had been pre-submitted by

what must have been HAG members as the chairman of HAG went down a list asking those who had submitted questions to stand and present them.

The list was so long that there was only time for two open questions at the end of the meeting and even those appeared some what "planted" although of course one would have no evidence of this.

There was no indication on the open invitation that you had to put your questions through HAG in advance just a note saying "This may be your only chance to influence the councillors' decision"!

I came away feeling as if I had been invited under false pretences to make up the numbers.

Having said that, Coun Burnett had not been privy to the pre-select questions by HAG and answered every one as I say in a most eloquent way. As a result my attendance was far from wasted.

I do some times think that it would be good to just dig a little deeper when reporting these planning issues to see if there is actually another view as opposed to the "loud oppose minority".

Not an easy task I know as maybe the "support" people can find opposition groups rather intimidating and the "indifferents" are obviously just that and have every right to be.

Even though, as I say, in this case we are all funding the HAG members through our parish council precept in our council tax whether we support them or not!

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