

## **E-mail sent from Derek Longhurst 30/12/2014**

Dear Chas, Rafe & Derek,

Following your decision to close down the ARAG website, I think it is appropriate for me to write both personally and on behalf of the many residents who have valued it as a source of information and debate over the last two years. I know how much work you have put into maintaining the currency of the website as well as funding it personally.

I can understand completely the reasons for your decision especially in relation to the repeated failures of Cheshire East Council regarding the Local Plan and five- year supply of housing land. I was pleased to work with you on the MMU project which had economic strategy and employment for our community at its heart. I think it is significant to note that the Inspector's Interim Report finds the Local Plan to be failing in these areas.

It is also important for people to know how much time and energy you individually and collectively contributed to Appeals regarding the protection of Greenfield sites in Alsager. At a recent Town Council meeting Councillor Hough made one of his typically snide remarks about me 'arranging for my friends to attend' the Sandbach Road North Appeal in December. I am happy to declare publicly, therefore, that I have never had to make any such arrangements indeed, it is arguable that we have operated in a collaborative and efficient way to cover these 7-8 day Hearings in the way that the community might have expected its three (paid) Cheshire East Councillors to undertake on its behalf?

I know that we have differing views about Neighbourhood Plans although I think we share the suspicion that they are now being promoted by the Coalition Political Parties as a way of distracting voters from the unpopularity of the National Planning Policy Framework that is effectively a Charter for Development Companies. How else to explain the Damascene conversion of Michael Jones and Cheshire East Council in June from a negative position to a positive one? I regret the loss of your website as an independent forum for debate about Neighbourhood Plans. If there is one to be developed for Alsager it is imperative that it is open, democratic and involves wide consultation. We cannot afford a repeat of the Town Strategy fiasco that has proved so ineffective at Appeals.

So, many thanks for everything you have contributed in trying to represent the residents of Alsager. Having been elected myself by residents it always seemed sensible for us to collaborate and odd that Cheshire East Councillors for Alsager have consistently adopted an unsupportive attitude. Perhaps this is something that ARAG members might wish to recall in May?

With very best wishes to you all

**Derek Longhurst ( independent Town Councillor)**

---

**E-mail from David Beasley**

---

To ARAG Officers

14/12/2014

Although the decision to close down the ARAG website was not unexpected, nevertheless I received the news with great sadness that the work of so dedicated and admirable a group of residents should end in the way that it has. Your group has fulfilled the needs of Alsager town's folk to receive accurate and unbiased news regarding the struggle between a clique of powerful and ruthless fortune hunters (the Developers) intent on exploiting the opportunities to obtain planning consent for Greenfield sites so wantonly presented by a feeble local institution (the County Council) and biased governmental law making (the National Planning Policy Framework). Your encouragement of members to make their views known through representations to Town Councillors, to their MP., to the Local Press and through public demonstration has been an inspiration, whilst your advocacy of the creation of a Technical University on the MMU site revealed a wisdom lacking in our decision makers. You have never advocated nor supported a 'NIMBY' bias, but have recognised the need for Alsager to contribute at a reasonable level to the solution of the Nation's housing shortage problem. Your philosophy of encouraging appraisal of decisions made by our leaders and the adoption of legal means to oppose them when considered necessary, has been an expression of care for the quality of life of our community, and I salute and thank you for it!

Yours Sincerely

**David Beasley**