

Notes on the Meeting between Newport Town Council and Mr Tegryn Jones, Chief Executive, PCNPA on 9th January 2012

Mr Jones had come to Newport to at last deliver a formal apology to Newport Town Council, as recommended in May last year by the National Park's Monitoring Officer as a result of his investigation into Bettws Newydd, through which serious communication inadequacies between Officers and the Town Council in 2006 and 2007, had been especially highlighted.

BNOG had written to the Chief Executive prior to the meeting, copying this letter to Town Councillors, to point out that a serious apology was due for poor communication, not just in respect of delays, but also for the lack of information and even more importantly, for entirely wrong information given by Officers, which led to possible appropriate actions not being taken in 2007 to rectify the situation at Bettws Newydd. The full letter can be read at <http://parrog.org.uk/120109%20PCNPA%20Tegryn%20Jones.pdf>

BNOG was highly disappointed by the Chief Executive's response to the meeting.

Mr Jones began by saying that

*"The history has been well documented and you probably know more than I do"
"What had happened didn't leave the Authority in a positive light regardless of the outcome; the way the Authority had acted was not to the standard expected of a public authority"*

Mr Jones continued

*"I try to look at this in a prism of what would happen today
Whatever ways were practiced or undertaken between 2007 and 2009 are significantly improved today
A number of changes have been made since I joined
Former customer practices are no longer the case
There are more formal pre-application arrangements
A validation process is now operating – and pretty standard nationally now
The inadequate plans and failures of documentation of that time will not be repeated
Nor the IT system failures and muddles of emails and a host of other inadequacies"*

And added,

*"There was arguably a failure of the enforcement process"
"The decision itself (The 2006 consent) was questionable The Inspector's inference from the Appeal was that it was incorrect that it was allowed in the first place"*

"Planning is a complex process but hopefully I can assure you that through this process of working changes a similar case is now unlikely"

Mr Jones's comment on BNOG's letter was that *"It reflected a lot of what has been said in the past. I try not to overanalyse or reanalyse other people's views"*. Whilst Mr Jones added that he was prepared to answer any questions that Councillors had on the letter, and one Councillor (Peter Harwood) did express concern that the Town Council Planning Committee's view in 2006, that the application scheme was not of an appropriate design, had not been respected by Officers, to which Mr Jones gave

assurance that the National Park *“has now resolved to give clear reasons for going against a Town or Community Council view in future”*, by then both parties were concentrating on trying to *“end on a positive note”* and the will to grill the National Park further on other issues raised by BNOG was seemingly not present.

Another Councillor, and the current Chairman of the Town Council Planning Committee, did confirm that a major improvement had been made since Bettws Newydd in that all submitted plans have references to datum allowing a better understanding of levels.

Towards the end of the short meeting, discussion strayed onto other matters before Mr Jones stated

*“As for Bettws Newydd, I feel we are where we are and must move on
Thank you for the opportunity to speak to you”*

The latter statement at least was reciprocated in chorus.

Thus it is left to BNOG to pursue the National Park over these matters which we are doing by writing again to the Chief Executive.

Watch the web site for our response.

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