



TIT TOP

VICTORY FOR THE TITNORE CAMPAIGN AS COUNCIL THROWS OUT DEVELOPMENT

Well blimey. Against all the odds it looks like Titnore Woods has been saved from the developers' evil clutches.

The decision made by Worthing Council's planning committee to reject the development plans for the new housing estate on the ancient woodland site on Monday (15th) had everyone shouting with joy and dancing in the public gallery. The crowd were so beside themselves they even gave the bloody councillors a standing ovation.

The committee, who conducted the open proceedings in Worthing's Assembly Hall, voted unanimously to reject the plans to build 875 houses. Around 150 members of the public turned up for the crucial meeting with banners, placards and drums.



"It's been a long fight," said one protester, "but it just shows you it's always worth taking the bastards on."

"We thought we didn't have a chance," said a Worthing resident, "but I think the councillors finally realised how angry local people were and voted with their consciences at last."

A significant police presence was deployed at the event and the public gallery was flanked on all sides by coppers and security staff keen to keep order. Members of the public were searched upon entry and had 'dangerous' items such as banners and placards confiscated. But no security force could stop the fury and irreverence that spewed forth from the public gallery.

From start to finish the committee was taunted, booed, heckled, laughed at and continuously interrupted. The impassioned speeches and questions that came from the floor rammed home the absurdity of the proposal even to the jobsworth committee. It was enough to raise a smile from even the most cynical anarchist.

Councillor John Livermore, who opened the proceedings, explained that there would be 15 minutes (you're too kind) of questions allowed from the public followed by a number of pre-registered speakers presenting their arguments for and against the pro-

posal. This was met with a shout of "no one here's in bloody favour of it!". His reply, "may we remind you that these proceedings are part of a democratic process", provoked mass laughter from the room.

The first to speak from the floor was local resident, Joy Hurcombe, who advocated abandoning the meeting entirely. She said; "In Worthing the housing quota has already been exceeded. There is a large supply of brownfield sites - at least 900 - that could be used instead of exploiting and destroying ancient woodland. Why are we then proceeding with this meeting at all?"

Robin Rogers, the Lib Dem Councillor called Titnore Worthing's "jewels in the crown" in a town "woefully short on green spaces".

He urged the committee to "stop dancing to the developer's tune," saying that, "if this development goes ahead we are going to lose this site for ever".

Inevitable issues were brought up, such as the hideous idea of adding more traffic to the bloody nightmare that is the A27, and the utter stupidity of building on a flood plain in area already at flood risk.

The threat to protected species such as dormice, bats, nesting birds and great crested newts who inhabit the woods was raised again and again.

One speaker said, "Do you understand that in this area there are many protected species? Do you imagine they will still be there after six years of development? What's the point of having protected species if they are not protected?"

To this James Appleton, (Worthing council's head of 'planning, regeneration and well-being' - oh, the irony) responded: "There are a range of mitigation and compensation measures that have been put in place." Go figure that one. How exactly they plan to 'compensate' for lost species evades us...

Another speaker said, "There is nobody in this room who wishes to speak up in favour of this. Is it not plain that local residents do

not want this development? Why then, at every turn, do you not allow us to speak? Why, for instance, did you change the time of this meeting to 2pm when it was originally set for 7pm when more people could attend. Why are you so afraid of local opinion?"

Another speaker said: "I used to play at Titnore Woods when I was a child. When you build on green spaces like these you create a lot of angry children with nothing but concrete to bounce off."

Appleton replied that one of the reasons to support the development was to "improve on the existing deficit of services in the area".

He outlined the developer's disgusting bribe to provide a new school, library, medical centre and sports complex including (ooh ahh) floodlit sports pitches, changing rooms and a skateboard park. With plastic trees as decoration presumably.

Councillor 'Killjoy' Livermore warned that the developers would almost certainly submit an appeal or seek a judicial review into the decision. He said, "The decision is only one step down the road. It will be back, that's for sure."



Meanwhile the protest camp remains in full operation, buoyed no doubt, by this happy turn of events.

* See www.protectourwoodland.co.uk

BRISTOLS AT DAWN

Baliffs attempting to evict a squatted building touted for a new Tesco in Bristol (see SchNEWS 713) were met with feisty resistance on Tuesday (16th). After the occupiers were tipped off in advance, they were ready and waiting for the eviction team on tripods and ladders. Two protesters locked on in concrete and had to be removed with sledgehammers and angle grinders. A crowd of around 300 gathered around the site to support the occupiers. Despite the spirited resistance, the occupiers were eventually evicted. Two people were arrested.

* See also <http://bristol.indymedia.org/article/692113>

NETAN-YAHOO SUCKS

The inverse law of political spiel states that, in order to get to the truth, simply reverse any statement made by any politician. So, when Obama says "There's no crisis in Israel-US relations" you know something weird is going down.

Side by side with the all-over-the-news spat between Satans great and small, the much maligned and sidelined Palestinians of the West Bank and Jerusalem seem to be kicking off in quite some fury. Hamas try to claim this as theirs - declaring a 'Day of Rage' after the rioting had already started. From England, we wonder if the Palestinians can fit as much Rage as we had during the 'Summer of Rage' into one day. Cities and towns across the west bank have erupted in street fighting between stone throwing shabab (yoof) and heavily armed IDF soldiers.

The Old City of Jerusalem has been closed to Palestinians on Israeli orders, and the main checkpoint controlling movement from Jerusalem to the West Bank has gone from being a transport bottleneck to an IDF live fire range. It looks like there's a chance that the oft called 'Third Intifada' may be kicking off.

Israel's relentless settlement drive in Palestinian East Jerusalem has been the immediate cause of all this. In the last month the Israeli state announced plans to demolish 200 Palestinian homes in Silwan, 'restored' synagogues in the Old City (an important religious centre for three wrong religions) and then announced that they'd be building an extra 1,600 homes on stolen Palestinian land.

Strangely, this last part didn't just annoy the Palestinians. The latest round of international hoo-ha was sparked off after this latest settlement building announcement was made while the US Vice President Joe Biden was in town. Biden, 'Israel's best friend in Washington', was preparing to be wined and dined by PM Netanyahu when the announcement was made. This is just not how the game is played by the seasoned political hypocrites in the Washington-Tel Aviv nexus. The way it's supposed to be is that the Israelis reluctantly agree to some 'painful concessions' to stop colonising (for a week or so when the US is in town) so that 'peace talks' can take place. As soon as the secretary of state, or VP or whoever, has gone - taking CNN and Fox with them - Israel starts building again and then blames the Arabs when peace talks fail.

Netanyahu's coalition of rightists, ultra-rightists and the religious right have decided that they don't need any of these long established niceties - going out of their way to humiliate their patron and provider the US of A as publicly as possible. Their 'apology' didn't seem to do too much good - claiming it was a mistimed briefing by low ranking Jerusalem official. As one former CIA analyst put it, that's like saying "Sorry I punched you on Monday. It shouldn't have happened on Monday."

Quite why they would do so has been the subject of much discussion. Could it be that Israel is sending a message to the US that it's perfectly happy with unilateral actions, and that this latest show is just testing the waters for an attack on Iran? Just as plausible is that Netanyahu's Likud government sees the Republican party as its natural ally and wants to take Obama down a peg or two. Or, over the next month or so there'll be the usual Israeli 'climbdown', followed by more settlements and a pointless peace process that serves to take the heat off the Obama administration for a year or so.

One thing for sure, the combination of US affront and Palestinian anger mean that for the first time in a long while the US is seeing something a little like the rest of the world has long been used to seeing - Israeli injustice met with Palestinian righteous anger.

* See <http://palsolidarity.org> www.awalls.org www.maannnews.net/eng

SHROP TIL THEY DROP

Last week a banner (SchNEWS 713) - this week a new home.

Anti-Coal activists have established a base camp on the site of a proposed new open cast coal mine in Telford, Shropshire.

There are already a number of tents, tarps and benders on the Huntington Lane site but more numbers will be needed to face up to the imminent arrival of UK Coal construction machinery. Hundreds of mature trees have already been felled to clear room for an access road and company representatives have visited to scope the site. Reports are that after the three years preparation work needed to begin work, only enough coal to fuel a power station for 7-9 months will be extracted.

The activists are re-erecting trees and stringing up nets, and rumours are going around of some engineering-minded locals getting involved to siphon off methane from the vents already in place.

If you want to join the fight against further devastation, or donate some sorely needed kit (or even teabags) email defendhuntingtonlane@hushmail.com or phone Chris on 07989 243057.

* <http://defendhuntingtonlane.wordpress.com>

THAI DYED

In a bizarre but effective stunt, Thai protesters splattered the government residence of their prime minister Abhisit Vejjajiva this Tuesday (16th) with pints of their own blood. Hundreds queued up to give 10ml of blood each. In total 300 litres (530 pints) were collected and spurted on the gates of the State's HQ in a true B-movie style gore fest. All routes to the government's nerve centre were blocked as protesters and police faced-off, but riot police eventually allowed a handful through to pour their symbolic offering. There were over 50,000 security lackeys on the ground, made up of 30,000 soldiers, 10,000 police and 10,000 civil defence volunteers - a slight overkill considering the 30,000 demonstrators present.

The protesters, appropriately known as the Red Shirts, are in support of former prime minister Thaksin Shinawatra, who was expelled in 2006 by a military junta. They consider the current government as illegitimate as it rose to power by default in 2008 after the previous administration was discredited on allegations of fraud. Abhisit has ignored demands to disband, only saying that he is willing to listen to the protesters, thereby keeping the situation in a stalemate whilst hoping that the protests run dry. The Red Shirts were into their fifth day of action by Tuesday while more than 100,000 demonstrators had assembled on the Sunday before.

The international airport in Bangkok has been on alert - with the powers that be not wanting to see a repeat of the occupation in 2008 by the Yellow Shirts (a faction affiliated with the current government). The Thai government has now implemented the Internal Security Act, empowering it to decree curfews, suppress gatherings and deploy troops. One of the protest leaders, Nattawat Saikua, told supporters, "The blood of the common people is mixing together to fight". He linked the symbolism of the action to the Thais who had fought for democracy and shed their blood in the past.

SUS-SEXIN' IT UP

Sussex university management backed down in the face of student and staff pressure this week as it agreed to reinstate the 'Sussex Six' - the students suspended or excluded over the occupation of the VCEG offices (See SchNEWS 713). This came after an 8 day occupation of a lecture hall and a vote overwhelming in favour of a motion of 'No Confidence' in the university's management. The teachers' strike continues, supported by Stop the Cuts.

* <http://defendsussex.wordpress.com>

ACQUIT WHILE YOU'RE A-HEAD

Sanity prevailed on Wednesday (17th) and Hunt monitor Bryan Griffith was acquitted of the manslaughter of Warwickshire Hunt member Trevor Morse (See SchNEWS 712), beheaded after an encounter with the rear propeller of his taxi-ing gyrocopter.

Griffith testified that he believed shots were fired at him before he stopped to refuel, and that when confronted on the airfield he felt his safety was in 'imminent danger' (apparently Otis Ferry and some other goons turned up at the airfield just after the incident).

He also relayed how Morse had refused to move after clearly being told he was obstructing the take-off, all of which was caught on video. Morse and other pro-hunters also had Griffith's address and were seemingly conspiring to take illegal action against him.

As the Warwickshire Hunt has a long history of violence against the Sabs, they took to using a gyrocopter for hunt monitoring. It can only point to how successful monitoring from the air must be for the stupid desperate action that cost one huntsman his life. Morse's actions may have been unpredictable, but the consequences of putting yer neck in front of 200mph rotor blades were not.

* <http://hsa.enviroweb.org>

BLOODY BANKERS

Smash EDO held a picket demonstration outside Barclays bank in Brighton (Wednesday 17th) to mark the 7th anniversary of the invasion of Iraq on March 19th 2003. A crowd of 25 protesters gathered outside Barclays holding banners announcing "Blood Money" and "Investors In Death".

The demonstrators handed out more than 1,500 leaflets informing passers-by that Barclays is the UK's largest investor in the arms trade, part of which is providing market maker services to ITT/EDO (See SchNEWS 701). Two security mannequins were stationed on the entrance of the bank but there was no visible police presence. Professional Witnesses Ltd (a private London-based surveillance company) was present in the obligatory white van to record unfolding events.

* www.smashedo.org.uk

...and finally...

It's been a case of "No Sex please, I'm Scottish" in New South Wales this week.

Paisley-born Norrie May-Welby, now living in Australia, has taken on the gender-nazis of officialdom and won the historic legal right to have a classification of 'Sex Not Specified' on all his/her/hir legal documentation.

Born a man, Norrie then had a sex change operation 25 years ago, before he/she stopped taking the female hormones and coming to terms with being Norrie in his/her body just as it was, neither labelling him/herself one gender or another (but whatever, still looking hot for 48 in this sexless-ist's opinion).

Not wanting to lie, deceive or run afoul of disbelieving officials, Norrie campaigned long and hard and has finally succeeded in getting legal recognition for a 'No gender' category.

Maybe this could be the precedent for a wave of such campaigns and one day passports will do away with gender, occupation, 'disabilities' and nationality and all just say 'Member of the human race'. While we fully support Norrie's action it does play havoc with our pronouns.

* For more history of hir story, see www.thescavenger.net

Disclaimer

SchNEWS advises all readers, take a leaf out of Titnore, take the bastards on, you might win. Honest.

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