

Getting things done – Morven Terrace and Ancrum Place sheltered housing



I had a meeting with residents of the Morven Terrace and Ancrum Place sheltered housing just before Christmas at which residents asked when the external stairwells would be repainted as part of external cyclical maintenance (ECM) works. Tenants also asked about possible insulation improvements.

The council's Housing Investment Manager has since updated me as follows :

We are planning to commence ECM works at Ancrum / Morven at the tail end of the 17/18 Financial year and I would confirm this will include a repaint to the stairwells and landings. Unfortunately this development is of a traditional build so is not a priority for External Insulation as it will have received cavity insulation in the past.

I have since been in correspondence with him regarding the properties' Energy Efficiency Standard for Social Housing ratings to ensure all properties meet current standards.

All properties meet minimum standards apart from two properties where old electric heating has since been improved with the provision of new gas central heating. I am particularly concerned to ensure end terraced properties have efficient insulation as a number of tenants here have highlighted end terraced properties appear to be less warm.

Contributions to this site

Some contributors have not responded to my appeal. I have to reduce the amount of time I am spending on moderating this site, which is now considerably more time than it takes me to write my pieces for it. As a result, from today I will not be publishing comments which are

1. Long

2. Part of a series of multiple comments the same day from the same person
3. Require me to investigate a named third party site or other sources to check out allegations about named people of named institutions.

I value all contributions from constituents, who are welcome to make a longer comment or comments on relevant issues under a local issues story. They should include the first part of their post code as an identifier if they want to submit long or multiple postings.

[Train accident in Andhra Pradesh is extremely distressing: Union Home Minister](#)

The Union Home Minister, Shri Rajnath Singh has said that the news of train accident in Andhra Pradesh is extremely distressing and deeply pained over the loss of precious lives. He was reviewing the situation of the train accident in Vizianagaram district of Andhra Pradesh as eight coaches of Hirakund Express derailed last night. He expressed his condolences to the families of the deceased.

[Discussions with the EU on departure](#)

The EU is always quick to point out that there will be discussions about the details of our departure, and these are different from the discussions about our future relationship. Some in the Commission fondly imagine they can make a meal of the former. There is even talk of presenting the UK with a large leaving bill! A few people write into this site to ask if we have to pay it. Of course we don't.

There is nothing in the Treaty to provide for the calculation and presentation of a leaving bill. There is plenty in the Treaty to say the remaining member states need to have good relations with neighbouring countries in Europe. Presenting a big bill would be a violation of that part of the Treaty.

The truth is the UK has a share in a wide range of assets built up by the EU over the years we have been a member, including our small shareholding in the vast bond portfolio of the ECB, our share of the many expensive properties the EU institutions own and occupy and our share of the cash and other

financial assets held by the EU. I doubt the EU will be totting them all up and wanting to send us our share. Our rights to those assets will be unenforceable once we leave.

Similarly, the EU has borrowed a lot of money whilst we have been members, to spend on itself and other countries in the Union. There is no enforceable claim on us for any part of that debt after we have gone. If they send us a bill we will tell them we will not be paying it. If I resign from a club which has borrowed money and has a valuable club house, I immediately lose my stake in the property and end any responsibility for the debts. If just after I left the club they sell the clubhouse and distribute some cash to members I don't get a share as a past member. The assets and the liabilities are assumed by the remaining members. When a new nation joins the EU it signs up to share in the present and future assets and liabilities for the duration of its membership.

Some in the EU seem to think we should be liable for the pensions of Euro officials who happen to live in the UK and are UK nationals. It is difficult to see the logic behind this. They acted as EU officials, as EU citizens, and swore an oath to the EU. No-one asked the UK to underwrite their pensions at the time they were accruing them. Surely the EU has to accept it incurred the debts and it needs to meet them. It is a pity it didn't invest the money from the pension contributions at the time, because then there would be no future problem.

The UK will have to pay the pensions of all those UK civil servants who have been effectively working for the EU for many years putting in place all their regulations and directives in the UK. The UK promised to pay their pensions and we will keep that promise. I was pleased to see senior German politicians now talking about how they will need a trade deal with us to keep their exports flowing. This is an early sign of some realism returning to the continental debate.

[UN agency urges support for small farmers to help them not just get by, but thrive and feed others](#)

22 January 2017 – Highlighting growing challenges, such as climate change and natural resource scarcity, facing small farmers in developing countries, the head of the United Nations agricultural agency called for information technology tools that can help boost their resilience as well as feed a growing world population.

8220Millions of small family farmers need technical and financial assistance to be more resilient and adapt to the impacts of climate

change,” said José Graziano da Silva, the Director-General of the UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO).

“They must be able to stay on their land, produce their own food and also have access to markets,” he added.

In his remarks at the G20 agricultural ministers meeting in the German capital, Berlin, Director-General Graziano da Silva noted that rural areas around the world will also be key in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development given that this where poverty and hunger are most concentrated.

At the same time, these increases in agricultural yields in these regions are required to feed a world population set to cross the 9-billion mark by 2050, and these will greatly depend on small family farmers, according to FAO studies.

Turning to the importance of information and communication technologies to build efficiency, resilience and inclusion of poor family farmers, the FAO Director-General spoke about the agency's digital strategy that aims to support them through knowledge sharing and bottom-up learning.

As part of this strategy, the UN agency is working with Google to make high-resolution satellite data an everyday tool to monitor and manage natural resources, promote sustainable and strengthen food security. It is also engaging with the World Meteorological Organization (WMO) – the UN system's weather agency -– to improve weather forecasts for farmers, as well as exploring ways to provide small farmers with microclimate forecasts.

Mr. Graziano da Silva said that these efforts would be aimed at countries that do not have national meteorological services established and urged for support so that meteorological data, available at global level, can be translated at a local level to benefit farmers, pastoralists and fisherfolks.

Also in his remarks, the senior UN official hailed the G20 for its continuing focus on the issue of water scarcity and on antimicrobial resistance (AMR).

According to FAO estimates, almost 2.1 billion people live in the dry areas of the world and that some 260 million people, most of them in rural areas, lack access to safe drinking water.

Inviting G20 Members to participate in the Global Framework for Water Scarcity – launched by FAO and its partners at the recent UN Climate Conference in Marrakech, Morocco – that seeks to help countries and communities improve the efficiency of their water use and increase their resilience to drought.

On antimicrobial resistance, the head of FAO called on G20 support to the UN agency's efforts to promote responsible use of antibiotics in the agricultural sector to prevent the spread of resistance.

Antimicrobial resistance occurs when microorganisms (such as bacteria, fungi, viruses and parasites) change, developing resistance, as they are exposed to

antimicrobial drugs (such as antibiotics, antifungals, antivirals, antimalarials and anthelmintics) used to treat the infections they cause. As a result, the medicines become ineffective and infections persist, become harder to treat and increase the risk of spreading.