

## Planning problems in Wokingham

The Lib Dem Council needs to raise its game in handling planning issues for our community. It needs to make a stronger case to demonstrate that the recent high rate of building has more than taken care of the targets in the current local plan. It needs to demonstrate there is plenty of land with planning permissions available for the rest of the plan.

It also needs to get on with producing a successor plan. The government has made it very clear that if the Council does not have an up to date local plan then Inspectors may well grant more housebuilding permissions and may well choose locations local people do not want to see built on. I have worked with a group of MPs to secure the promise from the government that they will not impose mandatory top down targets for numbers of homes to be built. More power will wrest with local Council to design a suitable local plan . An up to date local plan will be a key influence on any planning appeals after it comes into force. So get on with it, Wokingham Borough.

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## Slavery

I wholeheartedly condemn slavery. Today there is more work to be done to combat what is called modern slavery. There is not much specifically modern about the traffic in people who are bound to employers in low wage slavery in illegal occupations or working illegally because they did not gain legal entry to the country concerned. There is slavery and criminality behind the drug trades, the exploitation of some women and the passage of people illegally to new countries for the profit of the people traffickers. There is slavery in some illegal businesses employing illegal migrants and exploiting them over hours, pay and living conditions as they are outside the legal protections of our society. These are the slaveries we should oppose and prevent. These are the slaveries we can do something about. They are a blot on our generations.

Past slavery was horrific, but there is nothing we can do to ease the burdens or compensate the victims when they are long dead. Many past societies were slave based. The UK faced slavery and serfdom from the Romans, Normans, Barbary pirates and others, just as it worked with other countries to promote slave plantations in the eighteenth century. The UK turned from such practices with a successful anti slavery Parliament led campaign, helping the world to new standards of conduct. The Royal Navy played an important role in stopping the trade in people.

I do not expect compensation to be paid to the UK by those countries that invaded us, enslaved people, took their lands and abused them. Our attention should be on the present and future. There are too many current day abuses

which we can do something about which should be our priority. We cannot put right the conduct of people who died hundreds of years ago which we condemn. Our ancestors fought against their enslavers at the time and lost. The Roman legions and Norman army were powerful oppressors. However much you want to change that you cannot.

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## [Electric Vehicles \(EVs\) – with credit to Facts4EU](#)

“The team at Facts4EU.org have published a 2-part report on electric vehicles (EVs) in which I am quoted and which readers may find interesting.

Part I ([https://facts4eu.org/news/2024\\_jan\\_electric\\_scalextric](https://facts4eu.org/news/2024_jan_electric_scalextric)) is about the new law which came into effect on 03 January, about which relatively little has been written.

Part II ([https://facts4eu.org/news/2024\\_jan\\_electric\\_scalextric\\_2](https://facts4eu.org/news/2024_jan_electric_scalextric_2)) draws on the experience of one motorist who was forced to sell his EV after just 5 months and buy a petrol car instead. Readers will recall I published this motorist’s comments recently.”

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## [British food labelling](#)

Dear Colleague

Environment Secretary Steve Barclay yesterday announced measures to improve transparency in food labelling and make sure high-quality British food stands out from the crowd.

The plans, announced at the Oxford Farming Conference, will empower consumers to make informed decisions at the supermarket shelf and online, while backing British farmers producing food to world-leading standards of taste, quality and animal welfare.

The plans include a consultation on proposals to make food labelling clearer, such as highlighting when imported products do not meet UK welfare standards, and help ensure food produced to the highest standards is consistently labelled. The Environment Secretary will also speak with major online retailers to identify ways to better support online customers to understand the origin of their food products at the point of purchase, including the option of a Buy British Button.

Please click the following link to find more information on the measures, and to read comments from the Environment Secretary: [DEFRA News: UK Farming Schemes upgrade and Food Labelling announcements today \(4/1/24\)](#) (cloud.microsoft)

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## [Protesters wanting a quicker green transition should praise the UK and challenge others](#)

All the time we have a global system of national accounting for carbon dioxide production the UK will come out well from the numbers and China and India will come out badly. UK policy has driven a lot of heavy energy using industry out of our country to force us to rely on more imports. The imports from China mean more CO<sub>2</sub> produced in China and less in the UK. The UK has stopped most of its coal based electricity production and come to rely more on imported electricity. Given this is the approved system why don't the green campaigners rejoice at the UK's success in driving down its CO<sub>2</sub> output?

According to global figures China accounts for 30% of manmade CO<sub>2</sub> in the world and the UK under 1%. China's increase in CO<sub>2</sub> output in a typical year exceeds total UK output for that year. These numbers do tell us a truth about CO<sub>2</sub> and should encourage the campaigners to pressurise China to do far more than she is doing. They could turn their attention to the Chinese Embassies if they do not fancy trying a protest in China itself. China and India do rely on coal much more than the advanced countries to generate their power. They are opening new coal power stations and mines.

One of the reasons many people who accept the climate change theory do not do more in their own lives to buy green products is their sense of futility given the way CO<sub>2</sub> worldwide continues to expand whatever action the UK government and consumers take. Despite all the COPs, law changes in advanced countries and the resolutions in world bodies world CO<sub>2</sub> output continues to expand as the tenth anniversary of the Paris Agreement draws near. So why do Green campaigners attack our own country instead of concentrating on the sources of so much CO<sub>2</sub> growth?