

FINAL DRAFT

## **GREG HANDS MEETING SOUTH FULHAM RESIDENTS**

### **SHORT SUMMARY.**

**Please note these are not minutes and include information received after the meeting.**

About 150 residents attended the meeting at 7pm at St Matthews Church on Wandsworth Bridge Road on Wednesday 19 November.

The meeting was chaired by Greg Hands, and attended by Andrew Mitchell CEO of the TTT (he is ex-CEO of Crossrail), and Phil Stride. Also in attendance were other Thames Tunnel personnel.

All the Sands End Councillors plus Nicholas Botterill (previous Leader of the council) were present.

Greg opened the meeting by saying he will deal with individuals' emails to him and also points raised in the open letter to him sent by the Carnwath Road Coalition and circulated to everyone on the CRC (previously RATs./SSF) database.

Many residents voiced their disappointment of Greg Hands in not preventing the Thames Tunnel placing their main drive shaft in Carnwath Road – a densely residential area, comparing him to Zac Goldsmith, who successfully stopped it being sited in Barn Elms.

His response to the cost of printing and distributing the flyers was: “.... this meeting is entirely at my initiative and the leaflets were funded by Parliament and distributed by me and volunteers. TW/TTT did not see the leaflet before it was distributed, did not pay for the leaflet and had no part in its production”.

His response to the challenge regarding his shepherding through water bill issues is as follows, in an email to a constituent:

“..... the Order had no mention of the Tunnel, let alone its location. The Minister - Richard Benyon - and his Labour opposite number were quite clear on that.

The Order amended Labour's major planning changes seen in the last parliament, which changed the planning process for major infrastructure projects. Whatever one thinks about major sewerage works, they are most certainly major infrastructure projects. Returning to the Thames Tideway Tunnel, I think I heard Thames Water on Wednesday telling us that the TTT was the largest planning application ever made. I can't check that, but whatever one thinks of the project, it is very hard to deny that it is a major infrastructure project.

Having said that, I wasn't even a member of the committee which agreed unanimously (I think), in 2012, to approve the Order.”

Greg Hands reminded residents that during the consultation period he had meeting with ministers to argue the case against the tunnel in Carnwath Road. One resident demanded to know which ministers were involved and asked for minutes of these meetings. Greg

Hands said the meetings were not minuted, but he would see if he could find his notes. If so he would make them public.

Phil Stride summarised the stages and duration of the engineering works.

Greg Hands invited questions from residents. Many were concerned about increased traffic and air pollution problems and the impact on health.

Some residents complained that no-one from Thames Water, or any other agency had visited them to speak about the impact on them and their homes, many which are situated next to the site. This included residents of the two impacted Housing Associations. GH said he would contact both the CEOs of the impacted Housing Associations

GH admitted that the government ignored PINs recommendations especially regarding the environmental impact at CW, and also the impact on residents in CRR

It was also requested that GH would ask the Secretaries of State responsible for approving the Thames Tunnel DCO (Development Consent Order), Liz Truss (DEFRA) and Eric Pickles (Minister for Communities), to personally visit the site and meet the most affected residents, and meet residents at a public meeting to explain the reasons for this decision. He agreed to do so.

Greg Hands also responded to a local doctor who stated:

“ I think any proposed plans need to be put out to consultation to ensure the programme is well designed and aimed at not missing health problems (it would clearly be in Thames Water's interest to overlook any potential health problems resulting from their work).

Additionally, the availability of this ongoing health screening programme will need to be well publicized to make sure all sections of the population are aware that they can take it up, should they wish; and a properly designed programme will include base-line screening of mental and physical health, followed by periodic follow-up. There needs to be fail-safe mechanisms in place to report any untoward impacts, deaths or general increases in mortality rates to the relevant medical and civil authorities, and to respond to these impacts. This could put strain on local health services, which may require extra funding and resources.

This was followed by the question “”- What independent health screening do you propose to carry out on the local population to identify any health problems arising or deteriorating as a result of your construction work?”

Greg Hands agreed that this should be pursued and Thames Tunnel agreed to carry out an independent health audit on the local population. (The logistic of this would be for further discussion with health professionals).

Andy Mitchell appeared shocked at the outburst from residents. The questions revealed that Thames Water is still at the drawing board stage with their mitigation plans when they should be more advanced by now. Andy Mitchell has obviously been recruited because of his Crossrail experience, but he's still in the dark about the reality of the problems they have to face regarding the impact on people's lives. His experience of Crossrail is all underground – very different from installing drive shafts on the surface near people's homes.

Andy Mitchell also admitted in answer to a question that they will be drilling under homes – something previously denied.

What the meeting revealed was that the mitigating measures are hypothetical. They propose making adjustments once work has started.

Lady Dido Berkeley from the Thames Blue-Green Economy ( TBGE - a coalition of environmental groups, water industry experts and academics) who has lodged a Judicial Review, outlined the cost benefits of an alternative solution (Sustainable Urban Drainage(SUDs) and integrated water management), to a tunnel and although Thames Water admitted the need for SUDs, they still said the tunnel was necessary. She said that the alternative solution argument is getting stronger, with more evidence from other major world cities who have rejected the tunnel solution to rainwater run-off.

A worst case scenario 'what if' question came at the end of the meeting. Thames Water was asked what their response would be if someone died as a result of the impact on their health of the TT work. There was no meaningful response and Andy Mitchell finally said that they would monitor the situation closely .

The key points of the meeting for Greg Hands' action are:

- He requests that the Secs. of State personally visit the site and meet impacted residents on site and at a public meeting.
- He ensures that Thames Water finance a health audit of all residents living on Carnwath road and its environs, who are identified as badly impacted by the engineering works. This should also be extended to the nearby schools.
- He requests that TW finance a structural survey of all properties close to Carnwath Road built in the early part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century (which as one speaker said was built during the time of the horse and cart!), which will be subject to vibration, and also include commercial properties such as a recording studio?
- He will produce notes of his meetings with ministers during the consultation period.

Additional information from a resident at the meeting:

“..... I spoke to Andy Mitchell afterwards and he said to me, ‘The tunnel will be irrelevant in 20 years’ time. By then there will only be water shortages, no overflows.’ Thus confirming our prediction that the wretched thing would only have 10 years’ life anyway. And he’s the chap building it! “

Ann Rosenberg

On behalf of the Carnwath Road Coalition.

If you have any comments or queries, please contact [carnwathroadcoalition@gmail.com](mailto:carnwathroadcoalition@gmail.com)

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