

Proof of Evidence to Public Inquiry

Jim Martin Elected Hythe Town Councillor for Hythe South

I have elected not to be cross examined because I have a living to earn and sadly, I am not in a position to commit more time and money to these discussions. Unlike the Council's team of consultants, solicitors and barristers as well as those directly employed by the Council are all being paid to attend this inquiry whereas all of the objectors are giving up their time to attend and help the process of the inquiry. We have seen how keen the Council are to prolong matters and Filibuster their way through the inquiry, indeed I offered to give my Evidence earlier in the process but my offer was declined by the Council. Like all of the objectors, I simply cannot commit any more time, you will recall Sir, the 40 minute game of back and forth we had to endure regarding "Greatest or Greater Harms", an engagement that was only concluded by your intervention.

I realise that electing not to be cross examined means Mr Honey is unable to question me, but in the spirit of openness and transparency, I will answer one of Mr Honey's inevitable questions: I am not a member of Save Prince's Parade.

I want to address some of the statements made by Mr Honey in his opening statement. Mr. Honey said," Some people appear not to understand the proper remit of the inquiry". "Others appear to wilfully to disregard the remit of the inquiry" Mr Honey went on to say that there are "entirely fanciful suggestions" being made.

I am here to confirm Hythe Town Council do understand the proper remit of the inquiry. Hythe Town Council are not wilfully disregarding the remit of the inquiry and Hythe Town Council do not make fanciful suggestions. Hythe Town Council do take this inquiry very seriously and indeed it was Hythe Town Council's objection that prompted this inquiry.

I speak as a representative of Hythe Town Council. I am an elected Hythe Town Councillor, representing Hythe South Ward.

On the 5<sup>th</sup> June 2018 HTC held an extra ordinary meeting of the full Council to discuss the proposed Stopping up of Princes Parade. While receiving the minutes of the Plans and Works committee meeting, at which the Plans and Works committee had agreed to object to the Stopping Up order, the extra ordinary meeting discussed the proposed stopping up and the Council accepted the objection by the Plans and Works committee but agreed to amend the words of the Plans and Works Committee by adding an amendment with additional words.

**Original wording from Plans and Works Committee**

Some members felt that the proposal was premature as a full planning application had not yet been submitted and there was not enough information to support the proposal at this stage.

Some members would like more information regarding the proposed highway including the dimensions.

Some members noted that the stopping up order was a procedural matter and would only be enforced if a planning application for Princes Parade was approved.

Princes Parade is an iconic road, which provides parking for the public giving direct access onto the promenade, particularly for disabled people and was the only such facility in the district.

There was concern regarding the lack of detail as to where the new road would be.

#### **Amendment – Additional wording from HTC Extra ordinary meeting 5<sup>th</sup> June 2018**

Having regard to the committee's recommendation, the council wishes to add the following points to summarise its position:

1. The new road, given its close proximity to the canal, will have a significant and detrimental effect on the habitats both within and surrounding the Royal Military Canal AND will cause harm to the setting of the Canal AND will cause harm to the setting of the canal as a Scheduled Ancient Monument.
2. The stopping up of the existing road will hinder public access to the beach and the promenade.

In view of the comments made by the Plans & Works Committee, and the summary points above, it is the view of this council that the public interest is best served by the existing highway remaining as is and no new highway being built.

On behalf of Hythe Town Council, I respectfully ask the Inspector to refuse the Section 249 application seeking the applicants to revisit the form and nature of the proposed closure.

On behalf of Hythe Town Council, I have been shocked at the ambivalence and the "it's a certainty" attitude displayed by the Council and their consultants with regard to the planning process. The significant further changes being proposed by the Council, specifically the new re-routed surface water drainage system discharging onto the beach. This was discussed as if the proposal already had received consent, whereas, for your information Sir, the surface water drainage proposal and the electricity sub station proposal received objections at the Hythe Town Council Plans and Works Committee meeting on the 18<sup>th</sup> October.



5<sup>th</sup> October 2021

Added 8<sup>th</sup> November