

6 Glenbeigh Terrace
Reading RG1 6PB

David Owen
Chief Executive
Thames Water Plc
Clearwater Court
Vastern Road, Reading

10th November 2009

Dear David

As you will be aware, Thames Water's applications to redevelop the Bath Road Reservoir and convert the listed building for office use were unsuccessful. This application was not substantially different from the one that was rejected in 1997 or the one that was withdrawn last year, 2008 (as it would not have been accepted). Additionally, along with the rejection, councillors strongly recommended that, before deciding on the next course of action, Thames Water should now take some time for reflection, and reconsider their plans for the site in the light of the reasons for refusal.

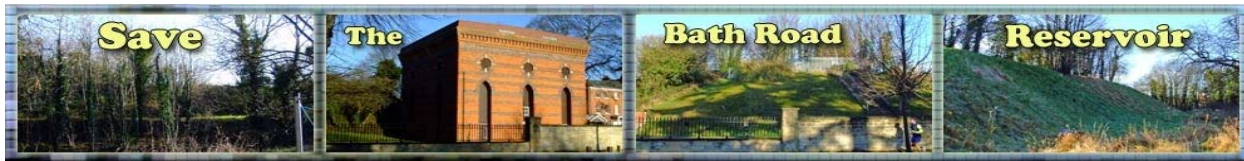
Taking this into consideration, along with the unanimous opposition and widespread unpopularity the proposals generated in both the local and wider community, we hope that this will help Thames Water realise that any development on this unique site must be reasonable, sensitive, appropriate, and in keeping with the character of the area, and must not be simply driven by short term profit and financial gain whether for its shareholders, re-investment or more general purposes. We would remind you that the people who opposed this development are also your customers and that the stance that Thames Water has so far taken has done much to undermine and damage its reputation.

As we have emphasised throughout the campaign to protect this site from overdevelopment, we are not anti-development; we understand the need to build homes, but key to our concerns is also that Reading is not completely robbed of its biodiversity, its heritage and its character in the name of short-term financial gain. We would also hope that this is a consideration for Thames Water, considering this is where its HQ is located.

Your biodiversity policy states:

"Good environmental management is central to the activities of Thames Water. The company actively seeks to limit the environmental impact of its business activities and to enhance environmental quality in areas where it has influence. Stewardship of biodiversity, both on our land holdings and where our activities may have an impact across the wider environment, is a responsibility we take seriously... we are committed to the following objectives:

- *Manage our land and water holdings to conserve and, where possible, enhance biodiversity.*
- *Plan and manage our activities to avoid loss of biodiversity.*
- *When commissioning and undertaking projects (including capital works schemes, other projects and maintenance schemes likely to result in disturbance or other impact to land and/or water), endeavour to avoid damaging wild species and their habitats and, where appropriate, create opportunities for biodiversity enhancement."*



Further to this, your policy statement "*Planning for Sustainable Future*" states:

"The views of our customers and other stakeholders help inform our decisions on levels of service and priorities...Our assets are not just restricted to and waste water treatment facilities. They include sites of local, national and international importance for their wildlife, which we work hard to protect and enhance" (Page 50, Asset Stewardship - Taking Care of Water, December 2007).

Section 40 of the '*Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006*' requires that:

"Every public body must, in exercising its functions, have regard, so far as is consistent with the proper exercise of those functions, to the purpose of conserving biodiversity."

To demonstrate implementation of this duty, accompanying Government guidance states that conserving biodiversity includes restoring and enhancing species populations and habitats as well as protecting them.

We would urge you to consider the above commitments when considering the future of the site; to consider Thames Water's Corporate Responsibility and reputation, and to honour the assurance given at the public consultation in May 2009 which was - were the applications to be refused, serious consideration would be given to rethinking plans for the site.

Now is your opportunity to put things right - to make good the claims made in the Thames Water Corporate Responsibility Report 2006/2007 of "*placing the environment and the community at the heart of everything we do*", and to be seen to value the environment and put something back into the community.

The Bath Road Reservoir site has been undisturbed for many years and is home to a rich variety of wildlife. It presents an opportunity for Thames Water to deliver your stated objective to "*protect and enhance*" wildlife sites of local importance.

We would like to re-open discussions with you through the good offices of our local elected representatives, who would all be happy to help facilitate a constructive meeting, and we invite you to engage with the local community, but this time we would like you to really listen and take on board the views and the wishes of the community.

We hope that we can work together to come up with a plan for the site which brings benefit not only to Thames Water, but also to local residents, to the wider community, to Reading's biodiversity and heritage, and which can be something that Thames Water and Reading can be genuinely proud of.

The Archaeologist Julian Richards once said: "*There is no other town in Britain, that I know of, which has done so much to destroy its own heritage as Reading.*"

We hope Thames Water can lead by example to show that this is not always the case.

We look forward to hearing from you

Yours Sincerely

Mel Woodward

On behalf of the Save the Bath Road Reservoir Campaign