

## **Statement on Curo from Cllr Robin Moss for Council**

In Westfield, as in other communities in the Somer valley, we have a number of WWII pill boxes, part of the defensive network built to protect industries & transport links during the last war.

One of these was owned by Curo, situated at the end of Elm Tree Avenue. As part of the local neighbourhood plan process local residents identified this as one of our historical features that deserved protection, & the parish council was discussing with B&NES about listing. Curo, fully aware of what was being proposed, chose to sell the land & pill box, knowing that the new owner intended to demolish it. This is the type of behaviour you might expect to be committed by unscrupulous developers but do not expect from a 'Housing Association'.

Community owned assets were transferred 'in trust' to Curo (then Somer), clearly that trust was mistaken.

I am asking the B&NES administration to review the inventory of assets transferred, to assess which may need additional protection.

However, sadly, this is not the only example of how Curo appear to have lost their way & strayed from their primary purpose: to provide housing support to those most vulnerable in our communities. The plans to redevelop Foxhill that are riding roughshod over local community objections, the tenant & council representation on their board that has been abandoned, people in debt being discouraged from applying for tenancies, advice services being withdrawn. Many councillors & residents in B&NES feel that Curo is no longer a partner in providing help & support.

I am writing to Central Government's 'Homes & Communities Agency' to ask for them to review Curo's status & registration, with all the benefits that brings. I will also be asking the Charity Commission to examine whether they should still qualify for registration exemption. I am encouraging everyone else who has similar concerns to also get in touch. At a time when the lack of affordable housing is reaching crisis levels, as a community we deserve a lot better than what is currently on offer.