

This statement is an appeal to you to apply merciful euthanasia to this defunct organisation, the Norton Radstock Regeneration Company. It was created with altogether worthy aims c2005 but its only connection now with Midsomer Norton is the domicile of the majority of its directors, and it has singularly failed to deliver 'regeneration' in any shape or form. It was set up originally as a holding company for the former GWR railway lands, commissioned to obtain planning permission for their development and according to its 2005 Articles of Association, profits from the Radstock development should be ploughed into similar projects in Midsomer Norton. (No mention anywhere of Westfield!) Unfortunately owing in part to the withdrawal of the original developer when consent was obtained in 2007, work did not commence until 2015, by which time B&NES Council had not only seconded a senior officer, and made other facilities available in the Hollies, MSN under the 2007-11 administration, and relieved the developer of responsibility of paying for the new road system, but under the LibDem following administration, ploughed in about a million pounds in 'ecological mitigation' and decontamination costs. So far two offices have opened on the site, so employment gain is minimal, and NRR directors blocked the attempt by Radstock Town Council to take up the 2014 scheme to move its offices into the 'community space' next to the Victoria Hall. The NRR has not even come up with an appropriate scheme to save the Brunel Shed. But then it never consults residents on its plans.

I have opposed the railway lands development since 2005, but approach it like Brexit. It is happening. Therefore my responsibility to tax paying residents in the Somer Valley is to make sure we get the best possible deal, just as I am sure we all want the best EU divorce settlement. I consider the NRR has become a sink hole. The sooner it is abolished the better. The problem is that it is now a separate legal entity, and although it has as directors both a B&NES Cabinet member and a town council representative, it is a law unto itself. Its assets came from the SW Regional Assembly, abolished in 2007, and the South West Regional Development Association, to which it was answerable in 2011 (email to me from a director) disappeared in the Osborne 'bonfire of the quangos.' I am reliably informed it is also in debt to BANES.

We do not have an 'audit committee' like the parliamentary audit committee at unitary authority level, but I would request you to refer the case of the NRR stewardship of its mandate as found in its Articles of Association and Mission Statement to the Resources Scrutiny Panel. All the directors I know are volunteers, and committed amateurs, but they have failed, and BANES has a responsibility to investigate.

Secondly, I would request yourselves to use your influence to persuade the directors to vote to dissolve the company and resign. As it says in the Book of Ecclesiastes, there is a time to be born and a time to die, a time to plant and a time to pluck up what is planted, and it is most definitely a time to uproot this withered weed, the NRR.

Eleanor Jackson.

