

I am Duncan Hounsell (B&NES councillor for Saltford ward).

The Mead Lane mooring trial 2016-17 was the result of a flawed process by the previous Conservative administration at B&NES. No alternative sites were properly considered for moorings and no other uses of the river-bank at Mead Lane were considered or evaluated. Essential scrutiny by councillors did not happen. Such scrutiny would have brought to light the significance of the major engineering works in 2005 to stabilise the Mead Lane river-bank with its implications for moorings. This inexplicable oversight was a major failure by the B&NES Council administration at that time. Saltford Parish Council was not consulted at the time merely casually and partially informed. What happened was totally at odds with the current Parish Charter

One of the first acts of this Liberal Democrat Council was to set up an independent review and consultation on the future use of the river-bank. It was during the review that the significance of the 2005 stabilisation works conducted by Halcrow came to light.

The six-figure capital investment was considered essential to stabilise this 300m stretch of river-bank. Without it, the road was expected to be lost within 10 years.

The bio-engineering design option chosen did **NOT** envisage moorings at all, moorings which could displace the rock armour and mooring pins which could undermine the bank. Even the wash from passing boats was considered a potential cause of bank degradation.

The stabilisation works were intended to last for 40-50 years.

A rising sewer follows the path of Mead Lane taking Bath's sewage waste to treatment works. The lane is the only access route to those sewage works. Any future loss of access for Wessex Water, residential properties and businesses or any discharge from broken sewers would lead the Council to be open to costs for damages if shown to be wilfully negligent.

Any recommendations from Lemon Gazelle came with the caveat "if viable".

The Conservatives made a massive blunder when encouraging moorings when they should have been discouraged because of the nature of the 2005 works.

The Conservatives encouraged boaters to moor yet provided no services, provided no funds to monitor and control moorings, and implemented a trial with no agreed criteria to measure success. They risked catastrophic failure of the river-bank and consequent reputational damage to the Council.

What sums it all up for me is the sight of a stricken tree, essential for the stability of the bank, ripped in half by the weight of a moored boat. I do not criticise boaters. What did the Conservatives think would happen with no facilities? They should apologise to boaters and apologise to residents for their ineptitude.

My ward colleague Cllr Singleton and I urge you:

- Approve a full engineering survey of the river-bank at Mead Lane to be undertaken as soon as possible.

Speech to cabinet re Mead Lane Thursday 16<sup>th</sup> January 2020 FINAL

- Begin a consultation on alternative sites for moorings and make use of the information provided by the boating community to Lemon Gazelle as to its needs.
- End moorings at Mead Lane so that vital infrastructure is kept safe, so that aquatic plants grow again, wild-life thrives, bio-diversity is promoted, and that this short stretch of river-bank becomes once again an open public space for all of us.

*END*