

P-04-550 Planning Powers – Correspondence from the Petitioner to the Clerking Team, 14.04.2015

Dear Jessica

With reference to the Petition submitted in the name of the St Mellons action Group, i would just like to make a brief response to the ministers letter to the Chair of the Pettitions Committee.

The current planning powers to deal with buildings that have fallen into disrepair, and as a consequence attract Anti Social Behaviour, affect the price of properties in an area in the view of our Action group is not sufficient. Owners of these properties, completely ignore requests for improvements to be undertaken, and in some case prefer to accept fines and improvement orders because they are the cheaper option for them. We believe that a much more robust approach is needed to the Wales Planning Bill, with the threat of compulsory purchase/land confiscation being one of a number of sanctions that should be available.

The community of St Mellons, has attempted to get the owner of the former Kwik Save Site to improve things, but despite promises and a planning application nothing has been done. The site remains a mess, it attracts anti social behaviour/graffiti etc and we can do nothing because the current planning application agreed by Cardiff Council planning department in August 2014 gives the owner approximately three years to get the promised work done.

This is simply not acceptable.

I would be more than happy to attend the committee along with colleagues from our Action Group if the Committee Chair and his colleagues would wish.

Many Thanks, Diolch Yn Fawr

Mike Payne

Member of the St Mellons Action Group.

Dear Jessica

Just a short comment in reply to your email regarding the above petition in the name of St Mellons Action Group.

We do not agree with the Minister that the current planning legislation has sufficient powers to deal with Derelict buildings etc.

In our opinion, owners like the owner of the former Kwik Save Site in St Mellons, ignore requests by planning departments to make improvements, rather having to pay fines and face improvement orders as the cheaper option for them, rather than undertaking the work.

We believe that tougher sanctions are needed such as compulsory purchase and confiscation of property where buildings have remained empty for a considerable period.

In St Mellons this site has laid empty for over 10 years it is a draw for anti social behaviour, it has devalued the price of property around the site and has led to considerable littering and unnecessary usage of Fire & Rescue and Police resources because they have to respond when things go wrong.

Despite assurances that work would start last November after a planning application was granted by Cardiff Council Planning Department, nothing has happened. This application simply gives the owner a further three years to sit upon this decision before he has to do anything. Meanwhile the community has to suffer. This is simply not acceptable.

We would be more than happy to appear before the committee if the Chair of the Committee and his colleagues would wish.

Many Thanks/Diolch Yn Fawr

Mike Payne
Regional Political Officer