

JTA/ER/P.L./Environment

25/4/88

Cllr. Mervyn Jones,
61 Sicily Park,
Finaghy,
BELFAST 10.

Please find enclosed 3 copies of a reply from Richard Needham's office to our letter of 14/3/88. I have not heard anything further from him about a date for a meeting, and will make contact with him in the next week or two if I hear nothing further.

Best wishes.

Dr. John T. Alderdice
PARTY LEADER



DEPARTMENT OF THE ENVIRONMENT FOR NORTHERN IRELAND
STORMONT, BELFAST BT4 3SS

Dr John T Alderdice
Alliance Party Leader
The Alliance Party of Northern Ireland
88 University Street
BELFAST
BT7 1HE

7 April 1988

Dear Dr Alderdice

As Mr Needham is on holiday at the moment I am replying on his behalf to thank you for your letter of 14 March 1988 requesting a meeting with yourself and a delegation from your Party to discuss proposals to improve existing Planning procedures.

You mention that your attention has been drawn to certain shortcomings in these procedures in the case of the planning application for a housing development at Cregagh Sports Club. The planning application was for 8 dwellings and 4 apartments on a portion of the Club's grounds and was refused on 23 March 1987. Unfortunately, due to an oversight, objectors were not informed of the decision to refuse and apologies were tendered at the time to all those who had made representations.

However, when the Sports Club appealed to the Planning Appeals Commission the hearing was advertised in the local press to allow the local residents the opportunity to present their views either in writing or personally at the appeal. At the hearing the Department's representative did not base his evidence on the substance of the objections received. Rather he argued the Department's case on the planning merits of the case and I can assure you that, where issues raised by the objectors were regarded as relevant planning considerations, they were presented forcefully at the appeal. In response to a specific request from the Commissioner who heard the appeal the Department's representative stated that 7 representations had been received in relation to the planning application. In reaching its decision to allow the appeal, therefore, the Commission was aware of these objections.

The Commission allowed the appeal on 9 October 1987 and you will appreciate that its decision on planning appeals are final and not subject to direction by the Minister or the Department.

The Minister regrets the oversight in not advising the objectors of the decision on the club's planning application, the appeal hearing was advertised and the Commission was aware of the objections before arriving at its decision. In the circumstances he hopes you will agree that the relevant planning issues were fairly presented at the appeal hearing.

On the general issues Mr Needham shall be very happy to meet with you and your colleagues to discuss your proposals and I will contact you shortly to arrange a suitable date.

Yours sincerely

J P A BREADY
Private Secretary

14/3/88

Mr. Richard Needham, M.P.
Parliamentary Under Secretary of State,
Department of Environment,
Stormont,
BT4 3SS.

Re: Request for Meeting re shortcomings in Planning Appeals Procedures

My colleague Cllr. Mervyn Jones has brought to my attention a serious situation regarding a Planning Application for a Housing Development at Cregagh Sports Club (Ref No. 2/87/0502), and a subsequent Appeal to the Planning Appeals Commission (Ref A155/1987).

Gibson Park Residents Association, which covers the area involved, objected to the original Planning Application for a Housing Development of 3 houses, and 4 apartments on part of the ground of Cregagh Sports Club in March 1987. The decision of the Planning Department was to refuse the Planning Application, and when this appeared on the relevant Planning Schedule, Cllr. Jones informed the Residents Association that the Application had been turned down. The residents Association realised that they should have been notified themselves as objectors regarding the decision, and aware that none of the objectors had been notified, assumed the delay to be because of some technicality in announcing the decision, and were not therefore expecting an Appeal at this stage.

Normal procedures were not carried out in this case, however, and no notification of the result were sent to objectors. Notice of the Appeal was placed in the papers during the holiday period (24th July 1987) and was not noticed by any member of the Residents Association, or indeed, by Cllr. Jones.

Contd/.....

The appeal was held, therefore, without any representations from the local residents, who had wished to employ a Planning Consultant on the matter. The lack of local objections at that Appeal was obviously a factor in the Planning Appeals Commission overturning the original decision and granting permission, as the Commissioner in his report stated that "the development of open space lands often leads to vociferous objections by local residents that proposals to build on open space lands would diminish the visual amenity of the locality and make existing homes less pleasant places in which to live. It is noteworthy that neither the Department nor local residents made any such claims in this case, and it can only be assumed that the residents of Graham Gardens and Ladas Walk view the proposals with equanimity".

As I stated above, I view of this case as an extremely serious one, where the views of the local residents have effectively been ignored in overturning the original decision to refuse planning permission for this development. I appreciate, however, that there is little that can now be done in this particular case, especially as the builders are now on site.

There are wider implications regarding planning procedures to this case, however. I have discussed these with several members of my Party, including Cllr. Jones, the Alliance Party Housing Spokesman, and Cllr. Montgomery, the Alliance Party Environment Spokesman, and we would like to arrange a meeting with yourself at some stage in the near future to discuss these with yourself.

Among the topics that we would like to raise would be the possible extension of the neighbourhood notification scheme to the appeal stage, the introduction of a system whereby objectors to an original application are informed when an appeal is to occur, and the streamlining of the advertising of appeals so that they appear in the press at the same time, and on the same page as the regular weekly planning lists, to minimise the possibility of the appeal notice being missed.

I feel that it is in everyone's interests to attempt to improve the existing planning procedures, which are seen by many to be impersonal and remote, and we would welcome the opportunity of meeting with you to discuss our proposals to improve the existing system.

Dr. John T. Alderdice
PARTY LEADER



21 March 88

Dear Dr. Alderdice,

Thank you very much for your kind invitation to the Alliance Party's 18th Annual Conference, but I fear I must refuse. I have resigned from being a spokesman for the Liberals/SLD and I hope a successor will be appointed before long to back up Lord Donaldson, who leads for us on Northern Ireland.

However, I remain Hon. Secretary of the House of Lords Ireland Study Group, which meets at 5 o'clock on a Wednesday afternoon, roughly every other month, to hear a speaker for 20-25 minutes and ask questions. The meetings are limited to one hour and are open to peers of all parties. *

We are hoping to get John Hume of the SDLP and Harold McCusker for the Unionists. It would be much appreciated if you could one day join us. Lord Bleasdale went so far as to suggest that I ask you for July 6th. It is asking a lot of you as I fear we cannot pay fares, but it would be good to meet you.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely,

Richard Hampton

Lord Hampton

Dr. John T. Alderdice
Leader, The Alliance Party of Northern Ireland
88 University Street
BELFAST BT7 1HE

* about 15-20 peers
usually attend,
Secretaries mem.

JTA/ER/P.L./P.P.Mtgs

23/3/88

Lord Hampton,
House of Lords,
LONDON, SW1.

Thank you very much for your letter of 21st. I would be delighted to try to get along to one of the meetings of the House of Lords Ireland Study Group, and I am sure I could find some way of getting there. However, July 6th is not possible for me since I will be on holiday during that fortnight. If you could suggest some other possibilities I will do my best to fit in.

Thanking you for your kind invitation. I look forward to hearing from you.

Dr. John T. Alderdice
PARTY LEADER

JTA/ER/P.L./P.P. Mugs

18/3/88

Cllr. Seamus Lynch,
Northern Regional Chairman,
The Workers Party,
6 Springfield Road,
BELFAST.

Last time we met, just prior to Christmas, I said that I would be in touch with you again for a further meeting, when I had completed my initial contacts. Now might well be a useful time to meet. If you would be agreeable, perhaps you would get in touch with either my office or myself (my home telephone number is Belfast 793097).

Best wishes.

Dr. John T. Alderdice
PARTY LEADER

To: D.U.P., O.U.P., S.D.L.P., W.P., James Kilfedder (Party Leaders)
Alderman James McClure DUP HSS Spokesman
Rev. Martin Smyth, OUP " "
Cllr Joe Hendron SDLP " "
Ms Mary McMahan WP " "

10/2/88

We have all been appalled at the critical deterioration in the Health Service in Northern Ireland, brought about by the Government's savage financial cut backs. There are almost unbridgeable gaps between the Parties on Constitutional matters at present, but as demonstrated by the joint meetings of the Ad Hoc Committee on the future of the Shipyard, there is no reason of principle why we should not meet to produce a joint approach to Government on the future of the Health Service. We are told that the Treasury is awash with money and the Chancellor will therefore be making a decision in the near future as to whether to use this money to repair the damage to the Health Service, or to cut taxation.

We would therefore propose an early meeting of Leaders and Health & Social Service Spokesmen to produce a programme of joint political action on this matter. On hearing your response we can co-operate on the necessary practical arrangements for a meeting, at a mutually agreeable time and place.

Looking forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely,

Cllr Stewart Dickson
Spokesman
HEALTH & SOC. SERVICES

Dr. John T. Alderdice
PARTY LEADER

Cllr Brian Wilson
Spokesman
SOCIAL SECURITY

JTA/ER/P.P. Mtgs

5/1/88

Mr. James Kilfedder, B.A., B.L., M.P.,
96 Seacliff Road,
Bangor,
Co. Down,
BT20 5EZ

Thank you very much for your letter of 30th December. Your suggestion of leaving a meeting until after the next King/Paisley/Molyneaux meeting in January seems a very reasonable one, perhaps we could be in touch after that.

Hoping that 1988 sees the beginnings of a more peaceful and hopeful future for our people and our province.

Best wishes.

Dr. John T. Alderdice
PARTY LEADER

JTA/ER/P.L./P.P.Mtgs.

4/6/38

Mr. James Kilfedder, B.A., B.L., M.P.,
96 Seacliff Road,
Bangor,
CO. DOWN,
BT20 5EZ.

Just a very brief note to thank you most sincerely, for all your kindness and consideration last Wednesday. It was most good of you to book the room, but, you also went out of your way and took no end of trouble in arranging for me to meet a number of your colleagues in the House, I appreciate that very much. I look forward to meeting you again soon. I will get in touch with you when I am coming over again, and we could perhaps have a meal, this time 'on me'.

Thanks very sincerely,

Best wishes.

Dr. John T. Alderdice
PARTY LEADER

J

The Workers' Party

NORTHERN REGIONAL EXECUTIVE

6 Springfield Road, Belfast 12
Telephone: 228663/226852
Telex: 748076

236 Antrim Road, Belfast 15
Telephone 752870/754427

Dr. John T. Alderdice,
Party Leader,
The Alliance Party Of Northern Ireland,
88 University Street,
Belfast BT7 1HE

28th. March 1988

Dear John,

Thank you for your letter of the 18th last inviting The Workers' Party to a further meeting with The Alliance Party .

As you may be aware , Seamus Lynch is out of the country at this time . I would suggest, therefore, that we meet at the end of April or early May. Perhaps you could suggest a time and suitable venue.

Yours Sincerely,

S. Harrison

Seamus Harrison , Secretary

file

F. H. H. H.

JTA/ER/P.L./P.P. Mtgs

4/5/88

Mr. James Kilfedder, B.A., B.I., M.P.,
96 Seacliff Road,
Bangor,
Co. Down,
BT20 5EZ.

Thank you very much for the arrangements you have made. The period 3.30pm to 5.00pm seems ideal, and I would be most grateful if you would be able to have it mentioned in the All Party Whip.

I am trying to make some other arrangements, and will let you know my programme when it has been firmed up.

Again, my thanks, and looking forward to seeing you again.

Best wishes.

Dr. John T. Alderdice
PARTY LEADER



HOUSE OF COMMONS
LONDON SW1A 0AA

1 May 1988

Dear John

I have booked a small room for you just off Westminster Hall for Wednesday 25 May for the period 3.30-5 pm. The room is W2.

You can let me know if you wish to have it mentioned in the all party Whips & what you would like to do that afternoon.

Yours sincerely

Jim Keefeder



HOUSE OF COMMONS
LONDON SW1A 0AA

23 April 1988

Dear John

Janis looks a ^{small} room for you in the
Commons for an hour during the afternoon
of Wed 25 May. I trust that there will
be a room for you: I think there should be no
problem. I will let you know after I return
on Tuesday to Westminster. [I have a YMCA
meeting on Monday evening].

Regards

Jim Keefedder

JTA/ER/P.L./P.P. Mtgs

19/4/88

Mr. James Kilfedder, B.A., B.I., M.P.,
96 Seacliff Road,
Bangor,
Co. Down,
BT20 5EZ.

Just a note of thanks for your hospitality and for the chance of a chat at such short notice. I thought about your suggestions, and since I will be over on Wednesday 25th May to speak to the House of Lords Ireland Study Group at 5.30 pm, maybe we could set something up on that afternoon. I have written to Julian Brazier letting him know that I will be over that day and I will do my best to fit in with any suggestions that either you or he might make.

Again, sincere thanks and best wishes, I very much enjoyed the chat.

Dr. John T. Alderdice
PARTY LEADER

Wednesday PM 13.4.88

Seamus Lynch returned
your call

Tel: (37) 228 663

JTA

The Rubber Stamp Co.

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