

MARTIN SALTER MP



NEWS RELEASE

For immediate release:
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THAMES WATER TOLD TO “GO BACK TO THE DRAWING BOARD” ON BATH ROAD RESERVOIR SITE

Thames Water have been asked to radically scale back their plans to build over 100 houses on the Bath Road Reservoir and to create a properly protected and managed wildlife reserve at the back of the site where the existing reservoir collapsed many years ago.

The call came at a meeting last Friday organised by Reading West MP, Martin Salter, with Thames Water’s Director of Communications Richard Aylard, planning consultants Broadway Malyan, and members of the ‘Save the Bath Road Reservoir Campaign’ including Minster Ward Councillor Paul Gittings. This is area of abundant flora, fauna and considerable tree cover.

Martin Salter said:

“At our meeting with Thames Water we put to them suggestions from local residents that there should be no development of the back reservoir as this is the prime site for wildlife and mature trees and is the area which is closest to residents’ in Western Road, Glenbeigh Terrace and Petworth Court. Thames Water have agreed to examine this and other suggested modifications and come back to us. However they were quite clear that they intended to press ahead with some form of development which would include using the existing buildings and land at the Bath Road end of the site.”

Local Councillor Paul Gittings added:

“Back in 1996 councillors of all political parties on Reading Borough Council approved a planning brief for the reservoir site which accepted the principle of some development but made it clear that this is an important site for wildlife and that appropriate mitigation measures should be proposed to protect and enhance any areas of wildlife value. Existing mature trees are also supposed to be retained along with the reservoir embankments. It is clear that the current proposals from Thames Water falls well short of the requirements of the planning brief and we left them in no doubt that without significant scaling back of their plans they will face considerable opposition from local residents and their elected representatives.”

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Thames Water have agreed to examine the residents' suggestion and hold another meeting prior to submitting a formal planning application."

Local resident and campaigner Mel Woodward added:

"The recent development plans from Thames Water have re-ignited the campaign that was led 11 years ago (and which successfully managed to postpone all development plans at that time) to protest against any redevelopment of the reservoir site, and have re-united residents in our campaign against all development of this beautiful and unique wildlife haven in central Reading.

Thames Water should take pride in their environmental responsibilities and this issue gives them the opportunity to show that they are serious about their commitment to the environment and the future of our country.

We are extremely pleased that Martin Salter was able to get us a face to face meeting with Thames Water and we hope that they will listen to our views and reconsider their plans."

/ENDS

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For further information please contact the Save The Bath Road Reservoir campaign team either via Mel Woodward at 07866500854 or Sarah Hayter via 07734 714537 or at www.savethebathroadreservoir.co.uk