

Gems Residents 4 Renovation

GRESHAM GEMS

22<sup>nd</sup> June 2006.

**Demolition Proposals –Gresham/Middlehaven.**

OPEN LETTER TO MBC CHIEF EXECUTIVE

To: Miss J. Richmond  
(Chief Executive Middlesbrough Council)

From: Gresham Gems  
Mr. Peter Birt.  
Mrs Catherine Rozevskis  
Mrs. Pamela Davies

On 21<sup>st</sup> June 2006, I and two other residents of Gresham ward, Mrs. Catherine Rozevskis & Mrs. Pamela Davies attended a meeting at the Ace Centre drop-in (these drop-in's are arranged by Middlesbrough Council to allow residents of Gresham & Middlehaven to meet with members of the regeneration team to discuss issues arising from the planned demolition of 1500 homes in the Gresham/Middlehaven wards) in attendance from the regeneration team were Mr Steve Cooke & Mrs Maggie Dark.

We posed the question as to why the council had decided to alter the planned streets for demolition from the map shown in the councils glossy dated April 2005 ( map 1) to the map in the councils glossy dated July 2005 (map 2) Mr. Cooke's reply was that, map 1 would have proposed the demolition of 2000 homes and that Middlesbrough council would have felt that they would not have received government funding for that amount of

demolition, so that was why map 2 was chosen, so I asked Why then are you proposing to demolish homes that were not on map 1 whilst at the same time leaving up homes that were, we were told that in the area of map 1 there was a large number of Asian residents and the council would have to consider the implications that this would cause to the Asian community as many Asian families lived in close proximity to each other and the council would have to take into account the distress and upheaval that this would have caused. By making this statement the council are saying that the Asian residents that live in this area are in fact a community within a community, when in fact it is the opposite, we are all ( no matter what colour, creed or religion) part of the same community that is what makes Gresham/Middlehaven unique, the myth of “Them & Us” does not exist.

I and many other residents of all persuasions that have lived along side each other mixing with each others cultures for many years find it most distressing that decisions concerning the planned demolition of our homes should have been in any way influenced by racial issues.

This comes at a time when the regeneration team are to make a presentation in the “Bow Street Mosque” about the plans for the area, this meeting is apparently for the Asian residents who would not or did not want to turn up at either the drop-ins or to the presentations that have been made in the area including the Gresham Community Council meeting, I like many of my neighbours am a firm believer in embracing all the many different cultures that exist in our area and we feel that one of the main reasons why the residents of Gresham/Middlehaven can proudly boast of the racial harmony that we enjoy is because we do not segregate, we do not look upon the Asian residents as “The Asian Community” but as part of “The Community” OUR Community.

The Mayor of Middlesbrough, Mr. Ray Mallon speaking to the full council meeting in the town hall in the evening of 21<sup>st</sup> June 2006 told us of his discussions with Asians in Middlesbrough

feeling that they felt Threatened, that people were treating them with Suspicion, we are fortunate to be able to say that it is not the case here in Gresham/Middlehaven, but if Middlesbrough Council are to embark on holding events exclusively for minority groups that have wide ranging effects on the area as a whole then they run the risk of being accused of differentiating between the people that live within that community and run the risk of not only ripping the heart out of this area but run an even greater risk of destroying one of the best area's within the Tees-Valley for race relations.

Surely the message should be to treat all people equally then we will look upon our neighbours as equals, to treat us differently we are in danger of looking at each other with distrust.

Best Regards,

Mr. Peter Birt.  
Mrs Catherine Rozevskis  
Mrs. Pamela Davies

#### **GRESHAM GEMS**

Press Release From Councillor Ken Walker  
24.June. 2006

Middlesbrough Councillor Ken Walker has been kicked out of the Labour Party. The political party that he has loyally served all his adult life. Ken has also been a Labour Councillor for 21 years including seven years as Leader of Middlesbrough Unitary Council. He has always recognised the collective need for group decision making, when for example setting annual Council Tax and Public Service budgets. However Ken insists, ward matters must be dealt with without fear of reprisal by all councillors irrespective of their political persuasions. The reasons given by the Northern Regional Labour Party to expel Councillor Ken Walker, is that he has effectively declared his intention to stand against the official Labour Party candidate at the local elections for Middlesbrough Council on 3. May. 2007. The Regional Labour Party claim that Councillor Ken Walker has done this by stating that: "He is not prepared to say that he will not stand

against the Labour Party in an open letter to the Evening Gazette & The Northern Echo Newspapers". Councillor Walker has therefore without any prior discussion taking place with him, been deemed to be in contravention of Rule 2A. 4 (b) of the Labour Party.

Ken Walker, councillor for Gresham ward Middlesbrough since 1995 said today. "I am deeply saddened by this undemocratic decision taken by the Northern Regional Labour Party, to without first inviting me to explain my current position, withdraw my Labour Party membership. I do not believe I have done anything that justifies such extreme action. I have simply done everything that the local electors of Gresham & Middlehaven wards Middlesbrough would have expected me to do as one of their democratically elected representatives. Over the past 11 years in my role as a Middlesbrough Labour Councillor I have consistently challenged the Government over weaknesses in law & order legislation including, Drug Dealing, Prostitution, (Kerb Crawlers) Violent gun & Knife crime and general Anti-Social Behaviour.

As Leader of Middlesbrough Council from 1995 to 2002 I introduced secure Alley Gates throughout most of the older terraced housing in central Middlesbrough, sent several petitions with thousands of signatures to Downing Street & the Home Office requesting new laws to bankrupt the evil drug barons, who still feed on the public misery that create distress and devastates many communities throughout this town and throughout the UK.

Quite frankly, I have been kicked out of the Labour Party for one reason and one reason only. It is because I have since July 2005 consistently refused to be silenced, despite the many threats of expulsion from the Labour Party, if I continue to publicly support many hundreds of Gresham & Middlehaven ward residents, currently facing the loss of their precious homes and community to the bulldozers by the actions of Middlesbrough Council Executive. ( Most people living in a democratic country that prides itself as the defender of free speech. Would call the actions of the Labour Party "A KANGAROO COURT".)

For the record, I wrote directly to the Northern Regional Labour Party offering my continued service to them as a Labour Candidate in Gresham ward Middlesbrough in the forth coming May 2007 local elections. It was the Labour Party that declined my offer because I still refused to give them a written undertaking to stop forthwith my public objections to the demolition of 1,500 homes in central Middlesbrough. What the people of Middlesbrough have to now decide is, not whether the council is right or wrong to knock down 1,500 properties. They need to consider the serious ramifications of a National Political Party dictating to your local ward councillors what they can and cannot say publicly, in supporting and reflecting the true feelings of their local electorate. I have now washed my hands of New Labour and its attack on the democratic right of free speech of their Councillors, Elected Mayors and MPs. I now put my continued trust and my political future in the hands of the residents in Gresham ward Middlesbrough.

Councillor Ken Walker: Proud to support and represent the good people of Gresham ward Middlesbrough.

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Middlesbrough Borough councillors would do well to heed the words of Sir Walter Scott:

O what a tangled web we weave,

When first we practice to deceive.

First we are told that the houses in Gresham are no longer suitable for occupation. At the same time we are told that demolishing 1500 houses, 500 less than the council's original target will make the area safer, whilst other crime ridden areas will not be demolished. Then we are told that it is the Government's idea and they are offering the money. Ray Mallon has told me that if Middlesbrough does not take the money it will go to other councils.

Now we are told that some streets occupied by Asians will not be demolished

because they are a community. So the arguments that these houses are unsuitable for occupation, that they are being demolished because the Government is providing the money, and demolition will make the area safer are all contradicted.

In the Daily Telegraph (20 May 2006) property pages, an end of terrace two bedroom Victorian house is advertised for £265,000. From its external appearance this house is inferior to those to be demolished as unsuitable for occupancy in Gresham. If it was in Gresham ward it would be earmarked for demolition.

In the Evening Gazette Homemaker Property pages (15 June 2006) a three bedroom house in Carlow Street is advertised at £88,000. One in Cromer Street £74,950 and one in Caxton Street £86,000 was under offer in three days. A two bedroom house in Bush Street is advertised at £94,950 and a three bedroom house in Tavistock Street is advertised at £104,950.

Can anybody wonder why I am so disillusioned with these Labour councillors?

### **Gresham Gems Residents 4 Renovation (the 'GRESHAM GEMS')**

**PRESS RELEASE: 25th June 2005**

**Gresham Cllr Ken Walker EXPELLED from the Labour Party for his opposition to plans to demolish the homes of his constituents. This is a cynical attempt to silence the popular opposition to Labour's MASS DEMOLITION PLANS.**

**GRESHAM GEMS** circulate this press release on his behalf of their local Cllr Ken Walker

Middlesbrough Councillor Ken Walker has been kicked out of the Labour Party. The political party that he has loyally served all his adult life.

Ken has also been a Labour Councillor for 21 years including seven years as Leader of Middlesbrough Unitary Council. He has always recognised the collective need for group decision making, when for example setting annual Council Tax and Public Service budgets. However Ken insists, ward matters must be dealt with without fear of reprisal by all councillors irrespective of their political persuasions.

The reasons given by the Northern Regional Labour Party to expel Councillor Ken Walker, is that he has effectively declared his intention to stand against the official Labour Party candidate at the local elections for Middlesbrough Council on 3. May 2007. The Regional Labour Party claim that Councillor Ken Walker has done this by stating that:

*"He is not prepared to say that he will not stand against the Labour Party in an open letter to the Evening Gazette & The Northern Echo Newspapers".*

Councillor Walker has therefore without any prior discussion taking place with him, been deemed to be in contravention of Rule 2A.4 (b) of the Labour Party.

Ken Walker, councillor for Gresham ward Middlesbrough since 1995 said today.

"I am deeply saddened by this undemocratic decision taken by the Northern Regional Labour Party, to without first inviting me to explain my current position, withdraw my Labour Party membership. I do not believe I have done anything that justifies such extreme action. I have simply done everything that the local electors of Gresham & Middlehaven wards Middlesbrough would have expected me to do as one of their democratically elected representatives. Over the past 11 years in my role as a Middlesbrough Labour Councillor I have consistently challenged the Government over weaknesses in law & order legislation including, Drug Dealing, Prostitution, (Kerb Crawlers) Violent gun & Knife crime and general Anti-Social Behaviour. As Leader of Middlesbrough Council from 1995 to 2002 I introduced secure Alley Gates throughout most of the older terraced housing in central Middlesbrough, sent several petitions with thousands of signatures to Downing Street & the Home Office requesting new laws to bankrupt the evil drug barons, who still feed on the public misery that create distress and devastates many communities throughout this town and throughout the UK.

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**Councillor Ken Walker: Proud to support and represent the good people of Gresham ward Middlesbrough.**

**GRESHAM CLLR KEN WALKER**

**LETTER FOR PUBLICATION IN THE LETTERS PAGE OF THE  
EVENING GAZETTE MIDDLESBROUGH**

Dear Evening Gazette,

We now have news of Cllr Ken Walker's expulsion from the Labour Party. Will the property developers and their Labour allies stop at nothing to get their hands on our homes?

Cllr Walker as always listened to his constituents (the very people that voted him into office) when it comes to this mad mass demolition scheme that will destroy the homes of 1500 families in central Middlesbrough.

It is now very obvious to those threatened with the loss of their homes that the prime motivation driving this disaster plan is one of greed. There appears a very strong desire to clear prime town centre real estate. It seems that the Labour Party have lost the plot completely by siding with the property developers in their quest for fresh building sites - all this at a time when there is a national housing shortage!!

Sense should prevail and government funding should go to improve existing homes which are both structurally sound and, unlike unpopular sink council estates, have lasted generations.

Labour need to get themselves back on track and quickly, the homes that they now threaten belong to the very voters that put them into office. Cllr Walker was doing nothing more than following the motivation which led him into the Labour Party in the first place: 'DEFENDING THE RIGHTS OF THE ORDINARY WORKING MAN'. To Cllr Walker, keep on keeping on, your principles WILL shine through.

Regards,

Ashley Marron  
Gresham and the GEMS