

Labour councillor resigned over new housing proposals

Helen Richards, former district councillor for East Retford South



Helen Richards, former district councillor for East Retford South

DISPUTE OVER DEVELOPMENT OF THE AREA

BY JACK FLINTHAM
jack.flintham@reachpic.com
@Incslive

A LABOUR district councillor has resigned with immediate effect due to housing proposals which could be built in her area.

In a lengthy statement posted on her Facebook page, Councillor Helen Richards who represented East Retford South on Basselaw District Council said that she felt her position had become "untenable".

She added: "My sincere apologies to everyone who put their faith in me in May 2015, again in May 2019 and most recently in last month's county council election.

"I am sorry to let you down.

"I had hoped to be a strong voice for East Retford South (aka Ordsall) at district, arguing for improvements to the lives of the local community and more widely across the district.

"Working with colleagues, I am proud of the success we did manage to achieve for Ordsall and Retford.

"I hoped to be a strong voice for Retford East at county (Council)... the electorate made a different choice, but I am grateful to those who did trust me with their vote.

"I am sorry that I have not been able to make the clearly articulated views of the Ordsall community heard at district in any meaningful way.

"You deserve to have your views heard and to be listened to.

"I do feel that I have failed you and so it seems to me to be only fair to hand the seat back to its owners, the people of East Retford South."

Mrs Richards outlined in her statement that in November 2020 she had conducted a survey of Ordsall residents about the proposal to build 800 homes in the area, which was set out in the council's local plan.

This survey had 495 responses to which she claims the majority opposed the proposed development.

Basselaw District Council has announced that there would be a

consultation period between Wednesday, June 9 and Wednesday, July 21 on the draft local plan.

This latest version would see 450 new homes added to the site meaning 1250 new houses could be built in Ordsall if the plan is approved.

The decision to increase the number of proposed homes in the area led Mrs Richards to hand in her resignation.

Responding to Mrs Richards' resignation, councillor Jo White, deputy leader of Basselaw District Council and cabinet member for regeneration said: "Helen Richards has been a strong voice for both the residents of Ordsall and the town of Retford, where she has served with distinction as the Charter Mayor.

"The council is losing a dedicated and principled elected member.

"The Government has a national target of delivering 300,000 new homes a year.

"This is placing a significant pressure on Basselaw District Council to build more houses, as we have to meet our share of this figure. Without a local plan in place, we are limited in the control we have over where these housing sites are coming forward and what infrastructure is provided.

"In recent times Retford has had an unprecedented number of new housing estates springing up all over the town as a result of speculative planning applications outside of the local plan process.

"There are more developers hovering in the background eyeing up more sites and only a local plan can help stop this.

"The Ordsall South site is consistent with the requirements set out by the government's national planning policy, and under this framework the site has the potential for more than 1,500 houses.

"The local plan is working to place a limit on this plus its responding to local demands for more retirement homes alongside more recreational facilities for teenagers and young people and a health hub.

"I agree with local concerns, the increase from the original commitment of 800 houses is unwanted and unexpected, but government planning policies which prioritise developers interests over community benefits have backed us into a corner.

"What we have done, however, is to ensure this housing brings with it additional infrastructure and takes place over a longer timescale to further manage the impacts.

"If there were options available to restrict the expansion they would have

been taken.

"My ask of government is that they listen to the concerns of local people and they allow their views to take priority throughout all consultation processes.

"The dilemma is controlled growth through a local plan, which will include legal requirements for infrastructure commitments including improvements to highways at every stage of development or a continuation of the situation we face now where there is unmanaged housing growth across Ordsall and Retford.

"I will also be dismayed if during the forthcoming by election candidates promise to overturn the local plan and prevent development in Retford as I am afraid that the government's intentions and national planning policy simply won't allow that to happen."

www.kettlewellscaches.co.uk

GOLDEN AGE OF RAILWAYS, RIVERS & CANALS

5 DAYS 16 - 20 AUGUST

INCLUDES CHESTER, PORT SUNLIGHT & LLANGOLLEN CANAL CRUISE

HALF BOARD £435

20 June	2 DAYS	LIVERPOOL CITY BREAK	£120.00
28 June	5 DAYS	LLANDUDNO SUMMER BREAK	£410.00
11 July	2 DAYS	SETTLE CARLISLE RAILWAY & LAKE DISTRICT	£155.00
19 July	5 DAYS	LOUNGING IN THE LAKE DISTRICT	£470.00
16 August	5 DAYS	GOLDEN AGE OF RAILWAYS, RIVERS & CANALS	£435.00
24 August	5 DAYS	FASTBOURNE	£350.00
5 September	2 DAYS	SETTLE CARLISLE RAILWAY & LAKE DISTRICT	£155.00
11 September	6 DAYS	GUERNSEY BY AIR FROM EAST MIDLANDS	£800.00
11 October	5 DAYS	CAPTIVATING KENT	£415.00
20 October	5 DAYS	LLANDUDNO - HOLLY & MISTLETOE	£390.00
15 November	5 DAYS	CUMBRIA - TURKEY & TINSEL	£375.00
20 November	2 DAYS	THURSFORD CHRISTMAS SPECTACULAR	£195.00

DAY EXCURSIONS

Tuesday 3 August	DOWNTOWN SHOPPING - GRANTHAM	£10.50
Sunday 8 August	SKEGNESS OR INGOLDMELLS MARKET	£15.50
Thurs 12 August	YORK SHOPPING OR SIGHTSEEING	£15.50
Wed 18 August	CLEETHORPES	£13.50
Wed 25 August	PICKERING & WHITBY	£19.00
Mon 30 August	SCARBOROUGH - BANK HOLIDAY MONDAY	£18.50

THEATRE

Wed 3 November	EVERYBODY'S TALKING ABOUT JAMIE - LEEDS GRAND	£55.00
Sun 14 November	THURSFORD CHRISTMAS SPECTACULAR	£69.50
Sat 25 June 2022	DREAMGIRLS - LEEDS GRAND THEATRE	£72.50
Wed 30 Nov 2022	LES MISERABLES - LEEDS GRAND THEATRE	£88.00

GIFT VOUCHERS AVAILABLE

FREE parking when travelling with us

Tel 01777 860360
Grove Street
Retford DN22 6LA



My sincere apologies to everyone who put their faith in me in May 2015, again in May 2019 and most recently in last month's county council election. I am sorry to let you down

Cllr Helen Richards