

Residents 2 Veolia 0!

ANGRY RESIDENTS TAKE OVER VEOLIA MEETING

A big thanks to everyone who turned up at the Grandstand for the Veolia meeting last Thursday evening. Veolia had sent along four representatives and were displaying some posters from their original planning application, complete with out of date maps, missing streets, and spelling mistakes. They brought questionnaire sheets for people to fill in, to detail and categorise concerns about the plans for a waste transfer station and fuel manufacturing plant on Long Leys Road. We estimate over **70 residents** were present at around 5.15pm and many were asking when Veolia would address the meeting. Residents were angry that Veolia had not communicated with them at all, either before or after the application was lodged last October. That is until this session was planned, just 10 days before the County Council Planning Committee meet to reach a decision on the Veolia application.



“It became clear that Veolia had no intention of addressing us as a group, and that meant there were just too many people and too little time to speak to everyone individually,” said Long Leys area resident Joanne Mead. *“I asked if people wanted Veolia to talk to us and take our questions in an organised way. The Veolia people were clearly very reluctant, but eventually we demanded this happened and it did. It gave us an opportunity to tell them how much we think the plans are just the wrong development and in the wrong place.”*

The four Veolia representatives made it clear they were not able to answer any detailed questions to the residents as a group. Their role was simply to collect comment forms and feed back the mood of the meeting. They did admit to being ‘very surprised’ at the level of opposition and the passion of local people.

“We’re tired of big business thinking it can walk all over us,” said Shirley Court of Albion Close. *“The meeting was just a ‘tick-box’ exercise. They sent people down to collect comment forms so they could say, for example, people are concerned about noise, odour, or traffic, and they’ll then try to pick off these issues one by one and pretend they have resolved our concerns. They just don’t get it.”*

The comment forms, and their use, so angered objectors that many tore theirs up. Others refused to complete them.

Ben Hill of Long Leys Road said: *“I tried to get feedback on the alternative sites Veolia had discussed with the City Council just the day before, but they were unable to give us any sensible response. It was clear that we knew more than they did, and the Veolia people on site were quite unable to discuss anything in any sensible detail. They were simply not the right people.”*

“I asked that if they could do nothing else, that they take back to their bosses the message that we felt it was unacceptable that they should wait to meet with us until the deadline for comments to the council was well past,” said Albion Close resident Chris Taylor. *“And that they should tell their bosses that we wanted to meet and talk with senior management - and that would have to be in the next week before the planning meeting on Monday 6 February. A Veolia representative said yes, this message would be passed on.”*

We really showed Veolia that we mean business, and will not accept this waste plant in our Urban Village under any condition. Veolia were totally unprepared, there were no decision makers present and they were reluctant to answer any of our questions instead wishing to refer everything back to HQ. They will NOT be able to say to the council that they have fulfilled the request to consult with the residents!



Officer's recommendation

On Friday morning we received the great news that the Lincolnshire County Council Planning officer has recommended to the Planning Committee that Veolia's application is REFUSED. The grounds for refusal are very precise and are regarding the hours of operation not being able to be separated from their current 24/7 parking depot use. HOWEVER, this proposal is still subject to a vote by the Councillors, who do not have to abide by this recommendation, plus there is still a very real chance that Veolia could amend their suggested working hours before, or even at Monday's meeting.

Visit www.stopveoliainlincoln.com for links to the full report and other news about the protest.

What can you do now?

Councillors will be paying a visit to the Veolia site before the Planning hearing next **Monday morning, 6th February**. It would be great if we could gather a crowd down by the Curtis Bakery entrance from **9.15 - 10.30am**. Just standing there quietly protesting, holding posters (no chanting, no marching, and absolutely no road blocking). Just a peaceful and visible protest that the site visiting councillors can't miss.

We also need as many people as possible to come along to the planning hearing on the same morning, **Mon 6th February, at 10am for a 10.45am start at Alive Church Newland LN1 1XD**. It's almost unheard of for the council to move the meeting to such a large venue, so we should have the room full to overflowing. This is the meeting where the County Councillors will make their decision to refuse or grant permission. Veolia will speak, our County Councillor will speak against the proposal and our group, represented by Ben Hill, will have 3 minutes to explain why we want this application refused.

It would be extremely helpful if you could attend one, or both, of these events.

PLEASE GET INVOLVED. EVERY VOICE COUNTS!