

Shed and Corruption: A summary of Parts, 1 to 19

Nine years ago, last week, the Planning Manager agreed with me as one of the main protestors that the enclosure, on the slipway, in UK Docks boat repair yard off River Drive was nearly 3 meters taller than permitted and as a result we raised a Petition which gathered a couple of hundred signatures because South Tyneside Council had done nothing about it.

I was reminded of this when another protestor who had been subjected to a certain degree of bullying from UK Docks pointed out to me, another failure of a petition against the Council and that one had gathered over 1000 signatures. [The Gazette reported, 22/11/21:-](#) *“Campaigner Leyla Al-Sayadi suggested the housing plans were a “done deal” and clashed with the council’s “so-called climate emergency.”* and it appears that they summed up the situation perfectly and even Councillor Malcolm was reported to have spoken out against the application in the same article.

Another article published later by [Paula Rivett of Spark based in Sunderland, said of Leyla’s campaign:-](#) *“Leyla Al-Sayadi, who lives near the park area, said: “Despite 1000 signatures on a petition, 70 formal objections and 370 members of a Facebook group, five people were given the power to have the final say on an area of the town they know little to nothing about.*

The article went on to say that a spokesperson for South Tyneside Council, bearing in mind that one member voted against: *“Six members of the planning committee voted on the application concerning residential development at Holborn. The quorum for the planning committee is one quarter of members and the meeting was quorate.”*

Cllr Tracey Dixon, Leader of South Tyneside Council, said: *“I’m delighted that these plans have been approved and I am excited that our ambitious vision for this area is coming together after years of careful planning and preparation.”*

It appears that the careful planning was to ensure that when the Planning Committee met, it voted for the conversion of a green space to housing. In the same article a spokesperson for the South Shields Green Party said:- *“We’re sure that many members of the public will join us in expressing bitter disappointment at the outcome of today’s planning meeting. The Labour members of the planning committee voted unanimously in favour of the redevelopment of the Holborn Riverside site. A decision which will see the destruction of the well-used and precious green space and children’s play area there.”*

Our petition was raised by those living on the Lawtop and in Harbour View in 2014 and it failed because it was summarily dismissed in May 2014, by the [Head of Development Services when he repeated,](#) in detail, the fraudulent misrepresentation made by his Planning Manager, 15-Jan-2014:- *“Approved Drawings – The following are details of the relevant drawings in the Council’s possession. The drawing that was submitted on 11th April 1996 with the application is numbered 8296/1A. That shows the overall height of the structure as 15.5m above the foundation level at the landward end.*

[The Planning Manager, Mr G Atkinson,](#) said that to cover-up the first misrepresentation made by his Principal Planning Officer. That was made in the first response to the complaint made by me on behalf of the local residents that the shed was taller than planned and the Council had done little about it. [First response, 13-Jan-14:-](#) *“The queries that you raise are not new, indeed I have been repeating my response to them for some time now, and you will recall that I explained the planning aspect of the Council’s position to you regarding this development during our meeting. . . . If you are still not satisfied with the Council’s response then you should use the Council’s complaints procedure which has 3 stages.*

[The response to the complaint, 10-Jan-14](#), that the slipway shed was 3m taller and a metre wider than the plans produced for ST/1146/13/COND and approved by the Planning Manager in October 2013, was a denial. The plans only consisted of one drawing and that was 8296/14 and it was by reference to it I could reasonably claim that the structure at 18.2m was taller by 2.7m than that which was been approved when I said:- [The north elevation is 15.6m high with a width of 12.2m](#).

I had raised the complaint on behalf to the other residents and that included Messrs Haig and Watson because we had had been told by the Principal Planning Officer, Mr Cunningham was that the structure was neither wider nor taller than the plans allowed. when he wrote, [20-Dec-2013](#):-
“Mr Dawson – once again – I have measured this on site and have copied the 1996 plans across to you twice already (attached again for your use) and I have explained during our meeting that the base and height of the structure are compliant. this is the end of the matter as far as I am concerned – Please do not email me again.

The meeting was one where he met three representatives the Tyne Gateway Assn, one of whom was myself the other two Haig and Watson were the Director and Procurement Officer, respectively, for a firm [HB Hydraulics based in Portsmouth](#). It is now based elsewhere in Hampshire.

We were disadvantaged from the start because of the two ward Councillors, Anglin and Macmillan, has sided with UK Docks and as I remember, they interrupted the first meeting of the Tyne Gateway Assn to ensure that two residents with an interest vested in the shed’s survival gained control of it. [This ensured the outcome of the meeting of 25-Nov-13 with Mr P Cunningham failed to produce a result](#):- *Michael, I took no minutes as is customary at these informal meetings. For your record I am sure all would agree. The Exec representatives of the Group accepted that the construction had been made legally as per drawings seen – Cllr Anglin, 1-Dec-2013.*

If the meeting had been formal and minuted and it would have been recorded that no approved plans had been produced, and secondly it would have recorded I had disagreed with every one else. I had to prove my point by measuring the width of the shed, [to dissociate myself from the rest of the executive, 16-Dec-13](#):- *“I have measured the structure concerned and it is a meter wider than the date stamped plan provided. Therefore the footings placed in 2001 must have been set a meter wider as well.*

It was more than coincidence that I was made aware [the approved drawing 8296/14](#), by the same resident who subsequently suffered when UK Docks prepared to extend what had become a shed some years later.

It makes one wonder what was the reward for the two Councillors, the Chair and Treasurer of the Tyne Gateway Assn for backing UK Docks claim that they had approval for their shed. Perhaps the reward for the Councillors was not to suffer the same fate Cllr Hamilton did for seeking the truth about the shed. It appears from this distance that in the years that followed she was first excluded from Council Business under the leadership of the now disgraced Cllr Malcolm and later by his replacement Cllr Dixon, headlining in the press, 8-Sep-21:-

*Councillor resigns from Labour Group on South Tyneside Council amid allegations over her treatment by colleagues – [Shields Gazette](#);
South Tyneside councillor quits Labour group she says 'refused her access to key information' – [Chronicle, 8-Sep-21](#).*

Both papers report that:- *The Beacon and Bents ward councillor has clashed with local party chiefs several times since being elected in 2018 and was previously stripped of the Labour whip.*

The immediate reward for the Chair and Treasurer of Tyne Gateway Assn were that they were able to starve the rest of the community of protesters of the funds that they had accumulated over the years. I believe that no accounts have ever been published since Mr K Haig became treasurer.

By the time of the meeting in November 2013, I had already taken my complaint against [No. 71 Greens Place to the Local Government Ombudsman](#) and realised the complaints procedure as operated by South Tyneside Council was compromised so that complaints were not only dismissed by the Ombudsman they made it appear that any complainant had been making allegations:-

The Ombudsman's final decision Summary, 8th November 2013: The Council followed the correct planning process to reach its decision to grant permission to Mr B's neighbour. The Council took account of the affect on Mr B's amenity, and took account of relevant planning policy.

It was a totally biased opinion as they had not followed due process and but it left South Tyneside Council with a problem as my neighbour, [Mr Haig, had been made to submit a retrospective application ST/0749/13/FUL](#) in July:- *Retrospective consent sought for works to heighten patio walls to rear extension and for the installation of solar panels to roof.*

Over the next month or so, the significant words, *heighten patio walls*, were dropped which not only saved Mr Haig considerable trouble of rebuilding both walls to the correct height but also saved the planning officer, C Matten, the trouble of of defending her rather liberal interpretation of the Council's own planning guide lines, SPD9, while the original application was overwritten by ST/0749/13/HFUL:-

Retrospective application for construction of parapet walls around the first floor patio above the ground floor rear extension and the flat roof above the two storey extension and installation of roof level solar panels.

It would have become clear that not only the planning guidelines, not been followed but someone had been giving misinformation to the Ombudsman. Because ST/0749/13/FUL had not been given due process, No. 71 Greens Place will only serve as a reminder to all how easy it is to corrupt the planning process, especially when the agent or architect for the development be easily persuaded to overwrite the approved plans [with ones the more closely represents what the developer desired](#).

No. 71's roof top balcony on the front is visible evidence the duplicity of the Council with the retrospective application. Less visible is the fact that the partition wall was built out of plan, leaving a gap which was ignored by the building inspector, Mr M Telford.

The case of UK Docks' shed was simpler and did not need an agent or architect to produce plans to overwrite the approved plans because they held a drawing, 8296/1B with which they could falsely claim they had permission for their shed, especially [when presented with a copped copy of 8296/2](#). Fortunately for them, the Council possessed 8296/1A, which could also be used to back the fraudulent claim that they had permission for the shed. Unfortunately for them the Council also possessed a [full copy of 8296/2 which showed the permitted height to be 12.7m, not 15.5m](#).

UK Docks would have known that their shed was going to be 2.656m taller than permitted when they asked [Maughan Reynolds Partnership Ltd to draw 8296/14 in August 2013](#), and whether they gave them this information is immaterial because Maughan Reynolds were duty bound to to stick to the original planned height or be accused of fraud and even the Council's legal authority would agree with me on this point.

When Mr Cunningham referred Melanie Todd, one of the most vociferous protestors, to the Complaints Procedure instead of answering her question about the height of the shed, I decided to look again at the plans that UK Docks and spotted that they were in error which lead me to having to put in the complaint in January 2014.

When the irregularities were ironed out, the approved height of the shed's [landward end was found to be more like 12.5m rather than 15.5m](#) and therefore it was a lie to say that the approved height was 15.5m at that end. We, and I in particular, have been accused of wasting a lot of Council Staff's time and effort but fact it is they that have been wasting ours in maintaining the lie that UK Docks had permission for the shed we see today and they have managed to do this for over 9 years.

The complaint that the shed was taller than planned and the Council had done nothing about it died a natural death when the [Planning Manager admitted on February 13th 2014](#) that the structure was not built to approved plans and with that breakthrough we held a meeting in the South Shields Sailing Club where we decided to raise the Petition and that I was to thank him for the concession about shed's height. Aware that he had said the drawing we had been discussing, had not been to scale which was yet another lie, [I had referred to the other drawing approved in 1966 and gave the height, 4-Mar-14](#):- *"Thank you also for confirming that the Slipway Shed is not built to the approved 1996 plans.*

Mr Atkinson should have been reprimanding his Principal Planning Manager instead of repeating the lie about the landward end of the shed i.e. UK Dock's fraudulent misrepresentation of the [shed's approved height when he said](#):- "I have explained during our meeting that the base and height of the structure are compliant. He did nothing pass the buck to his manager, [the Head of Development Services on the 25-Apr-14, Subject: feedback case 248789](#) - Dear Mr Dawson, I'm sorry for the delay. Mr Mansbridge is hoping to get a comprehensive response off to residents by the end of next week, Regards Gordon Atkinson.

[A week later we received a response to our Petition](#), not from the Chief Executive but from Mr Mansbridge in which he repeated the fraudulent misrepresentation his Planning Manager had made three months before:- *The approved dimensions of the steelwork are • Proposed height 15.5m at the River Drive end. The gradient of the slipway is 2.66m over the length of the shelter. This would mean the height at the riverside end would be 18.16m above the slipway; • Proposed length 22m; • Proposed width 12.2m.*

Put simply, drawings 8296/1A, and 8296/1B were never authorised but 8296/2 had and it shows the landward end to be 12.7m. Let me make it very clear that the drawing he was referring to, [8296/1A, had been nowhere near the authorising body, T&WDC.](#)

To sum up – while Mr Atkinson admitted to me, a week over nine years ago, that the shed had failed with both height and width to meet the original grant's 2nd condition, I realised both he and his Principal Planning Officer were avoiding the direct question first asked about the shed's height, basically, what is the approved height of the shed and three months later, Mr Mansbridge added his his own name, to what was becoming a list of miscreants, in his response to the Petition.

In May 2014, Mr G Mansbridge had either to stop the development on the slipway or lie about it and he chose the latter, when [he said in response to our Petition, 02/05/14](#):- *The approved dimensions of the steelwork are: Proposed height 15.5m at the River Drive end etc.*

The words are different but the intention was the same and that was to hide the misconduct of, what was by then, both his planning officers and naturally I was not content to let him get away with it and told him, 9-May-14, emphasising that he was not telling the truth and that [the approved height of the shed could be gleaned from 8296/14](#):-

“there is no supporting documentation which says that the approved height is 15.5m at the River Drive end.

I make no apologies for repeating that Mr Atkinson had exhausted the original complaint when he conceded that the shed was nearly 3m taller than planned. He knew as well as I did that both the approved plans gave the situation away and it was probably he who forced UK Docks to stop work on their shed in September 2013 and Mr Cunningham who made sure that they could restart it a few days after the Town Hall meeting in December 2013.

It was now obvious to me that Mr Mansbridge got himself into dire straits by repeating the misrepresentation of the shed’s height and his way out was to overwrite the history of our complaint *by introducing a new one at a second stage to present to the Chief Executive*, the one raised by in January having moved into its second stage when I had to bring it to Mr Atkinson’s attention after [Mr Cunningham had been dismissed after 4 days](#):- *“If you are unable to supply me with answers to my questions could you please pass the issue to someone who can.*

In the case of 71 Greens Place the architect was persuaded to redraw the plans so the owner could avoid a retrospective look at the plans but in the case of UK Docks they had no need to do that because of a [mistake made on drawing in first produced in 1966](#). The draughtsman had given the heights of both end as 15.5m on a gradient of 2.7m so one of them must be wrong and it is easy to show that it was the landward end.

I discovered while disagreeing with with both Messrs Atkinson and Mansbridge about 71 Greens Place that the Ombudsman would not look at a dispute until it had been through a council’s complaints process and that was why Mr Mansbridge reintroduced the complaint after it had been internally exhausted. He now had give credence to the new complaint and how he did it is explained in [Part 1 of Shed and Corruption under the heading The Mansbridge Trap](#).

To get it past the Chief was easily done because its author was asked to omit anything that referred to the height in [her faux stage 3 response which concluded, 25-Sep-14](#):- *“If you wish to pursue your complaint further you should now approach the independent Local Government Ombudsman. I enclose a leaflet explaining more about the Ombudsman's role.*

In 2015, a Senior Planning Officer gave misinformation and or misrepresentation to the Ombudsman and the [fraud that UK Docks had permission for the shed reappeared again](#), 15-Apr-15:- 34. *I have seen the 1996 plans. On plan 1/B the applicant has written the proposed elevations at the inland end as 12.5 metres plus 3 metres. Mr X says the Council should not have taken the applicant’s word for this – This developer applied for a shed 15.5 metres high at the land end. The Tyne and Wear Development Corporation as planning authority approved this.*

Later that year [the Council’s Corporate Lead accused](#), I and other Local Residents, of making allegations about the shed’s height when she wrote to the MP for Berwick, 25-Jun-15. The MP for Berwick, [Anne-Marie Trevelyan, had assessed the situation correctly when she said](#):- *“It relates to a boat shelter at Tyne Slipway, River Drive, South Shields which Mr Dawson me was constructed outside the remits of the approved plan, which was a stated height of 15.5m. According to my constituent, the actual height of the structure is some 3 metres higher, yet was signed off by the Council regardless.*

She had written to the Chief Executive and copied me in and I realised that Anne-Marie may not of known that the [boat shelter had been built on a slipway so I advised her](#):-

You have not specified that the stated height (15.5m) is of the river end of the shelter and it is likely that, Mr Swales, if he follows the arguments of the Planning Manager and the Head of Development Services before him, will say it refers to the road end.

I had also added, 9-June-15, knowing full well that both the approved plans backed our point of view:- *If Mr Swales provides any new plans to show you that I am wrong in my assessment of the development on River Drive by UK Docks please let me know.*

He could not and in Attachment 6 of the Corporate Lead's response, Anne-Marie had been told:- *The matters and allegations raised by your constituent are well documented and have been subject to a number of enquiries from Mr Dawson and other local residents over a lengthy period of time. The matter was ultimately referred by way of complaint to the Local Government Ombudsman, the outcome of which was delivered on 14 April 2015.*

First of all the Corporate Lead, Mrs H Johnson, 25-Jun-15, implied that we were lying when we said the shed was 3m taller than planned and secondly Mr Swales was unable to produce plans to show that I or any of your constituents were in fact, lying. She had inadvertently given me proof of why a Council planner was content to misinform the Ombudsman. Who was going to believe that a Senior Council Officer [had been telling the Ombudsman a pack of lies.](#)

Thirdly she made a comment in the attachment to the effect that anyone in the future, who suggested that the shed was taller than planned, [could be branded a persistent liar:-](#) *a number of enquiries from Mr Dawson and other local residents over a lengthy period of time.*

I later discovered that she had deliberately left me in ignorance of what she had told the MP for Berwick in her main letter or any of the other attachments when she concluded:- *I hope that this information is useful. Please do not hesitate to share this letter with your constituent.*

It was not until January 2016 that I discovered that not only had the Corporate Lead used the Ombudsman's findings to hide what was going on, the planners were also doing it. [Ms Alison Hoy, Customer Advocates, 9-Dec-15:-](#) *I have been forwarded your emails to the Planning Team dated 4th and 7th December 2015, in order to clarify the Council's position regarding your comments on issues relating to the existing boat repair shed at UK Docks Tyne Slipway and your earlier complaint to the Council regarding this matter.*

Your email of 4th December refers to not being satisfied with the responses to the second part of your earlier contact to the team on 30 September. This was regarding the planning enforcement aspect of the existing boat repair shed. This matter has been investigated fully by the Council through its corporate complaints procedure. The complaint was not upheld and was also considered and decided by the Local Government Ombudsman who found no fault with the Council's decision.

It then became immediately clear that Ms Hoy had been coerced into writing her response to my emails, by the officer advising planning officer, Mr G Simmonette who was backing UK Docks' proposal to extend their shed:- *"Mr Mansbridge does not believe that the shed has been built 3m too high. I maintain that he has been ill advised by Senior Planning Staff in their misinterpretation of plans or drawings. -[M Dawson, 4-Dec-15](#) .*

I had added some detail to make it very clear to him that the shed was taller than planned and where the blame for hiding this information lay [and I added, 7-Dec-15:-](#) *The width of the shed was measured shortly after as it could be quite easily done by very simple surveying and was found to be a meter wider than planned. It took three more months before the Council admitted that the shed*

was also too high. Please see email from Mr Atkinson, 13th February 2014, he was the Planning Manager at that time. We were using drawing 8296/14 in our discussion as it did not have misleading errors.

After receiving the copy of Appendix 6, I sought legal advice on Ms Hoy's email of 9-Dec-2015 and was advised to concentrate on the Council giving misinformation to the Ombudsman. I then decided to challenge the [Chief Executive about the wrongdoings of his staff and wrote, 8-Jul-16:-](#)

I ask you to look again at this because there is a clear contradiction between what the Council were telling the LGO and what is known. Why your staff should misrepresent the facts to the LGO is for you to determine. That they have misinformed the LGO should be admitted and corrected and that is what this letter is about.

The Chief Executive, like his Head of Development Services three year before, had been put in an awkward place because there was no way he going to admit that his staff had been lying to the Ombudsman even though it was obvious that was what they had been doing. His way out of was to personally accuse me being unreasonable and using a disproportionate amount of his staffs resources in trying to seek the truth about the shed.

He was overlooking the fact that if Mr Cunningham had admitted to us that he was wrong after he went and measured the shed, mid September 2013, the issue could have been settled there and then. That the shed would not have been have been any use if it had to be built to the correct size was not the Council's problem nor ours. It was up to UK Docks and their customers to sort things out and up to the Chief Executive keep a wary eye on what they were doing.

He did not write to me personally but asked someone whom he could rely upon to lie on his behalf, and that was his Corporate Lead – she had already mislead Anne Marie Trevelyan, a year earlier into believing that our claims about the shed were not true. Now, in 2016, [she lied to defend Mr Swales' reputation by saying:-](#) *There is no evidence to suggest that there has been deliberate misinformation provided by Council officers to the Local Government Ombudsman, Neither do I have evidence to question the content of the Ombudsman's investigation.*

I thought at first, that I should have asked the solicitor to write to the Chief Executive but noticed that the reference on my letter to him, had been changed by his Corporate Lead, from 248789 to 253539 and that realised that she was also hiding the Mr Mansbridge' part in the deceit about the shed's height. When she said there was no evidence to question the Ombudsman's findings she was being economical with the truth.

Perhaps I should of asked the [Solicitor to write to the Chief Executive but it looks like it would have made no difference.](#) Mr Swales was not prepare to change course stop the misuse of Section F of some staff code. The threat was:- *“Should you continue to repeat historic complaint issues in your contacts, we will consider imposing formal restrictions on your contact with the Council.*

I advised Mrs Johnson that I had consulted a solicitor but she chose to carry out the threat anyway. I know that my letter had been read because she was advised to drop one of her accusations. Where she had written that I had adopted a 'scattergun' approach, I responded:- *“I have not written to the local police, independent auditors or the Standards Board which you are implying. If I think that the Council is acting improperly on any issue I believe I am entitled to write to my MP – it is up to the MP whether he or she takes up my case.*

In the context of the meeting, the word 'legal' was used to imply that the shed had approval. It was significant that [when the threat was executed on the 5th October 2016](#), talk of 'scattergunning' was dropped. Apart from one major deceit and a couple of lapses, the ban on any of the staff in South Tyneside Council answering any query about the shed has been strictly enforced by Ms Hoy.

In 2016, you and I met at a Labour Party meeting and we talked about our mutual dissatisfaction with the way the Council were dealing with UK Docks and you advised me to contact you office manager Rebecca Atkinson which I did but I failed to follow up her request for information in any detail. My excuse was that I had returned to South Shields to sell my house in Greens Place and I had to concentrate on that and I now lived within earshot of their I became aware that they were flouting the 5th Condition attached to the grant awarded in 1966.

In 2017 a second Ombudsman conflated the two complaints, 1) that the shed was taller than planned and 2) that South Tyneside Council had misled the first Ombudsman into finding for them:-

1. *As the applicant has not discharged condition 2 why is there no retrospective planning application? - M Dawson, 10-Jan-14;*
2. *There is no evidence of fault in the way the Council dealt with the breach of planning control and its decision not to take enforcement action. It kept residents informed throughout the process. The complainant says the shed is also 3 metres higher than it should be. The Council says it is not. There is no fault in how the Council decided the shed is the permitted height. The complainant says the shed is also 3 metres higher than it should be. The Council says it is not. There is no fault in how the Council decided the shed is the permitted height. LGO, 15-Apr-15.*

The first, a breach in planning control was obvious as soon as we worked out that the shed was nearly 3m taller than planned and the planning officer kept the [residents misinformed since day 2 of the shed's life when he wrote](#):- *This development was approved by the Tyne and Wear Development Corporation.*

When the approved plans say that the height should be 15.5m at the waters edge and the shed has a height of 18.2m and that end, it is the truth to say to the nearest metre that it is 3m taller than planned. [It simply a lie to say that it is not](#). The Second Inspector, Mr P Lewis for the Ombudsman confirmed that South Tyneside Council were misusing the Ombudsman to hide both theirs and his almost total disrespect of the Seven Principles of Public Life outlined by Lord Nolan nearly 30years ago when he said 30-May-2017:-

After having read the decision by the Local Government Ombudsman in 2015, I consider that the matter of which you complain remains that of the lack of enforcement by the Council.

In the beginning they did take enforcement action but things changed when a planning officer backed by two Councillors and Executive of the Tyne Gateway Assn chose to back UK Docks claim that they had approval for their shed. This was done by presenting plans that misrepresented the height of the shed and Mr Lewis sidestepped this issue and the fact that South Tyneside Council have been giving misinformation to the Ombudsman when he concluded:- [I consider that your latest complaint remains that of your previous complaint](#).

He had, however provided the best example of conflation in one letter than South Tyneside Council had managed in 4 years of rigging their own complaints procedure.

[Then in our exchange of emails, 6-Sep-17](#), you said:- *The previous issues relating to the boat yard have in fact now been looked at by the Local Government Ombudsman and they found no issue with the yard or anything relating to its development. Unfortunately, the Ombudsman's decision cannot be re-visited.*

In relation to the conduct of Cllr Anglin you suggested that I contact the Monitoring Officer at South Tyneside Council, Mike Harding, who you can formally report your concerns to but what disturbed me most was their dismissal of the deceit about the shed:- *The council have also stated that they will no longer correspond on previous issues relating to the boat yard and its development and will now only address any new issues which arise.*

It looks like the office of Local Government Ombudsman is as corrupt a South Tyneside Council, and puts into perspective, the troubles that many boroughs throughout the country are having with their Grenfell like tower blocks.

In 2018 I discovered that while the Council would not consider any complaint about the misconduct of their employees, they were open to challenges about the misconduct of the borough's councillors and I knew of an incident that fitted the bill perfectly and that was [Cllr Anglin taking sides with UK Docks against the local residents](#) a meeting in the Town Hall in November 2013.

I took me a long while to get going on that one but eventually the Assistant Monitoring Officer, Council Solicitor, Gill Hayton was persuaded [to respond to my complaint about his conduct](#):-

I think it reasonable to say that the Councillor Anglin's conduct over the meeting led to a Senior Planning having to mislead the Ombudsman to hide the misconduct at the meeting of 25-Nov-13. I have tried to challenge him about this since but have failed to get a response.

[She was new to me and her response](#), 19-Sep-18, was encrypted which was annoying to say the least and after a month with no progress I had press her again for an answer, which some reason, [was recorded as a blog, 26-Oct-18](#), telling her:- *“The breach of planning control was uncovered in September 2013 and UK Docks should have at least been asked to put things right there and then. This was purely an issue between UK Docks and the Council, no involvement by the residents was needed at all.*

For the same reason I thought to include [more detail, two days later, via the last Chair of the TGA](#):-

What Mr Cunningham did not realise was that the gradient gave scale to the any drawing and showed that the river end was 15.5m rather than the road end and the shed was 2.7m too tall. It looks like the meeting on the 25-Nov-13 was arranged to cover(-)up both breaches in planning control and Mr Cunningham's and your responses (to) my emails following the meeting only go to confirm that assessment of it.

I eventually received a response on 12-Dec-18 but only after [I had prompted her on the 11th December with](#):-

The reason why Mr Cunningham and those that followed him could behave as they did is because the Council misinform the Ombudsman to cover their tracks and that is why the shed is still there and why the Council is now stonewalling Cllr Hamilton, myself and others - Where we go from here is rather up to you.

She led me back to January 2014 when Mr Atkinson first created the falsehood that the 15.5m had been approved, at the landward end of the shed [when she wrote, paragraph 7, \(my number\) on the twelfth](#):- *The Ombudsman found no fault in how the Council determined the permitted height of the landward end of the development was 12.5 metres plus 3 metres.*

Yet another variation on the main fraudulent misrepresentation. It looks like the staff in the Town Hall who were content to repeat the same misinformation to their Monitoring Officer that they had given to the Ombudsman 5 years previously.

In early 2019, Cllr Hamilton and you visited UK Docks and shortly after we were being told that they had been given retrospective permission for the shed on the slipway. At least it saved them from accusing us of making allegations about its size but like the Council's claim that it had been built to the approved height, it was still another lie and I was concerned that the Council would use it to replace the misinformation previously being fed to all and sundry for the previous 6 years. I then wrote to whom I thought was the Monitoring Officer, Mike Harding but it took me until the end of the year to establish that retrospective permission had not been given.

I was much relieved and I should have thanked the new Monitoring Officer, Nicola Robason, for confirming that it had not been given but she/STC were still in denial about the shed [when she added, 19-Dec-19:-](#) *“I understand that all complaints procedures regarding this matter have been exhausted both internally within the Council and externally.*

When the Council had recovered the documents for covering the original grant made in 1996, ST/024/96UD it was very clear that UK Docks did not have approval for their shed particularly with regard to its height and our complaints must have been valid because the yard went quiet for at least two months but scaffolders and builders arrived within days of the Town Hall meeting of 25-Nov-13 and [Cllr Anglin declaring that he took no minutes of the meeting.](#)

This was not true and it was not recorded that this member of the group dissented because we had not seen any approved drawings at the meeting. It was no coincidence and that the yard came back to life a few days after the meeting. It looks like it had been set up perpetuate the fraud that UK Docks had permission for their shed and as you can see South Tyneside Council have by various devices managed to hide the truth about the shed's height.

I cannot even find out what the Corporate Lead said to an MP so there is little chance to find out who persuaded the string of officers from Peter Cunningham to Nicola maintain the deceit about the shed. Clearly the backers of UK Docks' plans gained ascendancy over the more principled planning officers and it was some time before the end of 2013.

After that UK Docks the all clear to complete their shed as quickly as possible. It was even put to use maintaining a Port of Tyne tug, months before its completion and until it was extended in 2017 the Nexus Ferry used to be maintained with its bow or stern hanging off the back of the slipway bogie and a few metres without the shed and yet nothing was done about UK Docks' inconsiderate behaviour.

I have called my current blogs Shed and Corruption because the Council were so obviously two faced in their dealing with the residents or UK Docks and their backers. To the Port of Tyne and Nexus one can add the Ministry of Defence as the heavy-weights leaning on the likes of Mr Swales and Mr Mansbridge.

At the end of 2019 I conveyed my suspicions to you that the Council had made their mind up about the shed from [the very beginning when Ms Robeson said, 19-Dec-19:-](#) *“The Council has recognised that the development of the shed on the site is unauthorised but concluded some time ago, in accordance with the Constitution, that no enforcement action would be taken as this was not in the public interest.*

I felt that the year had ended well for me and I was happy with your response. You had said a couple of days before Christmas:- *“Good afternoon Mick, I am aware Angela and David are dealing with this, please can you let me know if there is anything needed from me. Best wishes, hope you have a lovely Christmas, Emma.*

I thanked you but unknown to me, the cancer of corruption had spread along Westoe Road from the Town Hall to your office under the agency of a Mr K Palmer. Your former partner emailed me, [8-Jan-2020 for my phone number for permission](#) for him to pass it to Keith Palmer and I gave it on condition that we could discuss the troubles both you and I had had over the years with UK Docks and their shed.

On 13-Jan-20, I returned a call to to your office, mid afternoon, and quickly discovered that Mr Palmer was dismissive about was UK Docks and [I hastily dropped you a line that evening:-](#)

*“He hinted at, expensive litigation, vexatious complaints and presenting new evidence to the LGO which shows he has been warned off helping me by an official at the Town Hall which in turn goes back to the attempt by the CLP to deselect you.
What I really needed from you was your support and Mr Palmer has indicated by our exchange over the phone that he is not prepared to give it.*

I had attached the letter from the solicitor in Sunderland but it appeared to have been deleted from your inbox because after some thought, [I sent you an email on the 14th asking:-](#) *“Is it safe to assume he is your Office Manager in South Shields and we should write to him on any issues we have with UK Docks?*

[This did not please Mr Buck and he responded](#), 14-1-20, with the implication that I was not polite and not being truthful:- *“I wish to address two points you raised. I was present during the conversation between Mr Palmer and yourself. I am afraid your recollection of the conversation was not a true account. Mr Palmer was polite, informative and accurate.*

Mr Palmer was polite but on UK Docks whether he was informative or accurate was questionable. This only confirmed my suspicions that Mr Palmer in your office in South Shields under false pretences. I noticed that Mr Palmer never answered his email and thought to write to Mr Buck after a suitable period of time to find out what was going on while [you were in Westminster and added](#), 24-Feb-20:- *“Over the week end I have reposted my comments on the Ombudsman’s finding for paras 19-23 and paras 30-38 you will see that a Senior Planning officer from South Tyneside Council has told her something rather different and I quote from 38.*

[Anyone can look these up by typing `30-38`](#) into the harbourview.co.uk, as that and the other content the email must of really riled Messrs Buck and Palmer and their mentor because Mr Buck responded:- *“Thank you for your recent emails. However, I must draw your attention to your continued vexatious, slanderous and personal attacks on a valued member of staff working from the Office of Emma Lewell-Buck MP. Staff employed by Members of Parliament etc.*

In the preceding six years, I had accumulated so many nil returns or excuses for avoiding the question of the shed’s height that I got bored with keeping a count, there were a great many but in any of these denials, until Mr Buck’s response in February 2020 did I see the word vexatious.

[An article in the Gazette posted by Chris Binding a year ealier](#) was the first record of the word vexatious being used by the Council and that was by the Interim Head of Legal Services, John Rumney. The article was in connection with complaints being addressed by South Tyneside Council and that possibly points to him as the originator, though as I read on, it was more likely to have been Cllr Doreen Purvis.

Mr Rumney's warning that records for previous complaints may not be available to build a historical picture, sounds rather ominous. If one compares our timeline with that of the Council’s for instance, one will find a gap in theirs occurred some years ago and that was where it was admitted that the Planning Manager had conceded that UK Docks shed on their slipway off River Drive was in fact, taller by 2.7m, than permitted.

Michael Dawson.