

## A PERSONAL VIEW – SPEAKING AT A PLANNING COMMITTEE MEETING

*Written by John Bullimore*

When I go to speak for or against a planning application at the Borough Council it feels very much like appearing on Mastermind (except that I sit on a hard wooden chair and not the black easy one) and it goes a little like this:

*“Your name is:”* Asfordby.

*“Your specialist subject is:”* What is in the best interests of Asfordby.

*“You have three minutes to answer questions”* (but in my case to put forward the Parish Council’s concerns) *“on your specialist subject.”*

The planning committee nudge each other and smirk; “Not him again!”

Lorraine, who takes the minutes looks up, goes pale and says “Oh no, not him again! I’ll borrow his notes later on.”

I hit the minutes running – far too fast for the committee to take in the facts, or so the results that I’m getting appear to say.

*“Your time’s up”* says the question master (chairman). *“Please,”* he says again *“will you wind it up NOW”*. Three minutes – he must be joking. It was more like two.

But I’ve started so why can’t I finish? The score is always the same and sounds very much like the voting that takes place in the Eurovision Song Contest: *“your score is NIL POINT pour Asfordby.”*

They voted against us yet again. Shall I go home and slit my wrists or have a drink? No matter which, I’ll be back next month for more of the same and NO, Lorraine, you can’t have my notes. You’ll just have to keep up your shorthand or persuade them to give me a little more time.