**Chairman ... Councillors**

**I am the Chairman of the Hitcham and Taplow Society. In that role I speak on behalf of the Executive Committee of the Society and its membership of 200 households.**

**The Society praised the initiative of your Chairman for negotiating and securing the Land Securities monies and it has encouraged its members and other residents to suggest proposal for using those monies.**

**The Society welcomed the criteria published by the Council for assessing the quality, relevance and viability of each proposal. It supports the Council’s decision to reduce the list of proposals to be presented for public scrutiny at the Parish AGM to only those which in its judgment meet the criteria.**

**The single point which the Executive Committee challenges is the Council’s intention to make those judgments in a closed meeting. It considers that there are no reasons why the discussions to reach those judgments should be made in secret.**

**Further it considers that the Council has offered no valid reasons for the resolution to become a closed meeting.**

**Your Clerk set out the process that the Council intended to follow regarding the proposals in an email dated 14 April. The email did not say that a closed meeting would be part of the process.**

 **A reminder of the closing date for the receipt of proposals was emailed to the Society membership at noon on 25 April. It included the substance of the process set out by the Clerk amending the process which had been described in an earlier email to the membership requesting proposals.**

**Late that afternoon the agenda for this meeting today was brought to the attention of the Executive Committee. It was its first knowledge of the Item 2 resolution for the meeting to be a closed meeting to consider Item 3.**

**The Executive Committee decided that a follow up to the reminder should be emailed to the Society membership to inform the members of the closed meeting resolution, of its Executive Committee considering it should be a normal open meeting, and of its wish to know if the members think it should be a closed meeting.**

**The Executive Committee considers that your Chairman speaks on behalf of you the Councillors and it considered offensive to be told “how foolish you are” and equally offensive to suggest that it had not seen all the relevant emails.**

**It was very surprised indeed to be told that “the die is cast” before Item 2 had been discussed or voted on.**

**Further the Executive Committee is concerned that this meeting is a special afternoon meeting and not a normal full Council evening meeting.**

**It considers that the closed meeting element of what is otherwise a welcome process may tend to engender mistrust and suspicion.**

**The Executive Committee and the Society membership is firm in this appeal to Councillors to vote against the Item 2 resolution and to proceed to discuss Item 3 in a normal open meeting.**

**If you do so vote I shall stay to report the content of the Item 3 discussions to both the Executive Committee and the Society membership.**