

## Turn off most of the streetlighting at night?

I'm a great fan of dark skies – and very keen to reduce carbon emissions and encourage biodiversity. But Councillor Pete Sudbury has set this cause back many years by the clumsy way he has handled this issue. If we want to make a change like this, we need to try to take people with us.

The report which Pete was asked to approve (and astonishingly it was his decision alone) should never have been released for publication. There are lots of things wrong with it, for instance the fact that it doesn't mention women and girls once. Also, it claims that crime does not go up when the lighting is turned off. Of course it doesn't, because lots of people just stay at home when they don't feel safe out and about at night! Or they use their cars, instead of walking and cycling, as the Council would like us to.

Fortunately, public pressure has forced Pete to defer the decision on this and he has promised to provide a new report. He says now that he wants to consult people and listen to our views, so that the implementation of the policy can take account of "local requirements". The new report needs to explain how he proposes to do this. One of the things people were most angry about was that he was all ready to make a decision without listening to anyone. The enormous amount of money he plans to save is apparently already in next year's draft budget!

He wants to turn the streetlights off from 11pm to 6.30am. Does he not realise that there are thousands of people who come home late or have to go to work early? We don't all have the luxury of a nice 9 to 5 job, near where we live. In Oxford City there are of course often many people still around after 11pm and much later.

The way this has been handled has further eroded public trust in the County Council, just when councillors should all be trying to rebuild it. It's really disappointing.

***Cllr Susanna Pressel.***