



Central Area Campaign supporter Paul Wesley addressing the public meeting called amid fears for the future of the market square Contributed

# 'Bombard' councillors with T3 protest letters



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Totnes town, district and county councillor Robert Vint at the protest meeting.

RESIDENTS in Totnes and the surrounding villages are being urged to bombard South Hams Council with protest letters and postcards in the battle to prevent the heart of the town from being built over.

Campaigners are calling for the future of the market square to be taken out of the hands of local planners and handed over to the community.

The town is currently embroiled in a major protest over the decision to earmark the historic square, along with nearby car parks and the prized Leechwell Garden, in the local plan process as a potential development site for up to 70 new homes.

More than 300 people packed into the Civic Hall for a recent protest meeting where they called for the future of the area to be decided by the community-led neighbourhood plan - which will have to be decided by a town-wide referendum.

The meeting was supported by representatives from businesses, market traders, district and town councillors, the neighbourhood plan team and members of the Central Totnes Campaign.

They are now calling for people to deluge leading district councillors with protest letters and post-

by **STEVE PEACOCK**

cards calling for any decision over the zoned area - known as T3 Central Totnes Area in the local plan - to be handed to the community to decide what should happen to it.

Protest group spokesman Georgina Allen said: 'People are not against development but we want to make sure it is not the type of hit-and-run development that we have seen so far. We want development based on need not greed.'

The campaigners are now planning to set up a new Save Totnes website and are encouraging people to come up with 'creative ideas' to find ways for finding alternative acceptable sites for the 70 new homes.

They are also aiming to involve local schoolchildren in the campaign.

Ms Allen said: 'It is their future that is involved here. We don't want to see Totnes destroyed like other Devon towns have been.'

South Hams councillors have dismissed the fears as 'whipping up unnecessary and unfounded rumours' and 'stressing out' the community.

But that did not stop more than

500 people taking part in last month's protest march through the town centre.

She also pointed out that an online petition had so far attracted more than 4,000 signatures and 1,000 individual comments.

'Totnes is not just the market town for Totnes, it is the market town for the villages around it,' she added.

'This does not just concern Totnes, it also concerns all the villages and towns in the South Hams and that has been made very clear from the petitions.'

After the meeting, town and district councillor Jacqi Hodgson, who was one of the speakers, said she would be pressing for support for the T3 zone being removed from the joint local plan process at the next South Hams and Totnes Town Council meetings.

She added: 'The public meeting, held at the Civic Hall was clearly a huge success.'

'Not only did it clearly give everyone a clear idea of what is going on and to some extent how the system works, how it is now being broken and failing residents, but also provided a simple action that many people could support with a sense that collectively we can make a difference.'

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