Never in its 225 years history has the future of Aldenham Reservoir looked so bleak. Since Liberty Lake Leisure Ltd/Jewel of Hertsmere assumed ownership in 2015, it has become a shadow of its former glory.

The water has been drained beyond recognition. The consequences for the marine life, fauna and local ecosystem have been catastrophic. The children’s play area has been sawn down. Ugly metal fences now adorn the southeast side of the Reservoir. Footpath access to the nature trail remains precarious having been temporarily restricted last year as the owners challenge the County Council over footpath rights. Weeds, moss and litter now engulf the historic dam whose underside is being exposed to ice and freezing temperatures in the winter, and baking heat in the summer since the draining which in itself is weakening the dam structure. Regular blue algae blooms create a stench and present danger to fish and passing dogs. The Sailing Club was forced to close, having been established in 1937.

We know that Hertsmere residents are as angry and upset as we are that the Reservoir has been allowed to descend into this state of neglect and chaos by the private owners. It is therefore amidst this crisis situation and in the spirit of supporting the common good that we stand united across our party divides in the defence of Aldenham Reservoir. We say to the owners “enough is enough.”

In the coming weeks and months we will be working together towards achieving a lasting and just solution. We are exploring the possibility of enacting a Compulsory Purchase Order to bring our Reservoir temporarily or permanently back into public hands. We call upon both Elstree & Borehamwood Town Council, Aldenham Parish Council and the public to back our ambition and to also help source a potential future non-profit owner.

We aim to work with residents and community groups to both secure its future and public access, preserve its beauty and integrity, whilst avoiding harmful developments on the land.

We will not bow to threats or blackmail of any description by sacrificing unsuitable green belt land next to the old “Fisheries” for yet more housing, however we remain open to the idea of appropriate leisure facilities being developed on site providing it benefits the public, does not breach the land covenant and does not adversely affect the environment or wildlife. We completely reject the current owners’ proposal to lower the spillway by 2m, draining the water levels further.

The Borough Council’s recent approval of Asset of Community Value for the Reservoir is a statement of our intent. We remain firm in our resolve to protect our borough’s jewel and will do all we can to ensure that it glistens once more.

Yours,

Cllr Caroline Clapper – Hertsmere Conservatives

Cllr Jerry Evans – Hertsmere Lib Dems

Cllr Dan Ozarow – Hertsmere Labour & Cooperative Party