

# News in Colour or in Black & White

*Sir Peter Bottomley MP*

*Worthing Herald and Littlehampton Gazette Article*

*09<sup>th</sup> September 2021*

We should be grateful to news editors and to producers of current affairs programmes. Decisions must be made on what is news, what is true and what is important. Many in the BBC, ITN, Sky news and newspapers have careers that match mine in length. They can be more significant in impact.

Constituents and others have made encouraging comments about Thursday's Newsnight programme dedicated to the layers of problems in residential leasehold flats. Generations failed to tackle problems and scandals when they first became obvious.

The battling heroes include campaigners in the charity Leasehold Knowledge Partnership, women in the National Leasehold Campaign and the powerful Cladding groups with Katherine O'Riordan in the Westminster team. They organise connections and meetings; they liaise with reporters and they engage with ministers' offices, sometimes overcoming lack of knowledge or absence of urgency.

We help turn wrongs into right. We seek enactment of practical measures recommended by the Law Commission. Our invisible actions years were vital in getting government to commission their analytical work. Sustained pressure was needed to get the Competition and Markets Authority to force some developers, freeholders and managing agents to undo unfair sales tactics, exploitative ground rent clauses and abuses.

Shades of opinion, gaining perspectives on problems and realistic solutions, discussing who benefits, who pays and when: this is where contrasts and blending of colours become relevant.

Art Quarterly, magazine of the Art Fund, features the Italian poet Dante Alighieri. Over 700 years ago his Divine Comedy illustrated how action must be taken in order to make a mark on the world, describing how different actions have very different consequences. The illustrations are as impressive in black and white as in colours.

Many are moved by the ITV programme STEPHEN. Detective Chief Inspector Clive Driscoll found the trail of evidence that made possible late convictions of two of the killers of Stephen Lawrence. The events of 1993 stay with me. Then as the constituency MP, I did some of the right things; I did not do enough. The series ignore the vital role of the Daily Mail.

I have always been active in cases of justice and racial injustice. We recently questioned court procedural processes. The minister's office discovered an unfair order should not have been issued. This is an example of people with various roles and responsibilities doing their tasks properly.

Whether my skin colour is the same as yours or different, our life experiences can be the same. Sports teams, the National Health Services and our broadcasters now reflect national inclusiveness and our diversity. The Afghan crisis is a reminder that we have local links with every part of the world. We still work for those in danger.

There are local issues that interact with national policies. One challenge is the proposed expansion of the Rampion wind farm. MP colleagues Nick Gibb and Andrew Griffith point out that wind farms should be 25 miles from a National Park, not ten miles from the South Downs, not just eight miles from shore. Residents are unconvinced West Sussex is the place.

Latest news is about house building proposals to trample over the fields between Kingston and the A259. Birds flying above our constituencies see separation of our hamlets, villages and town. My strong repeated plea to ministers is to allow identity to be preserved, not continuity of building all along the south coast.

The black and white headline we want: Green fields saved; Red light shown to bad development plans: and skin colour that matters no more than the colours of our eyes.