



# They just want us to up sticks and leave

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A PENSIONER living in a flood plain is locked in an ongoing battle with Chester City Council. Peter Johnson, 65, of Farndon Hay, claims the council has a hidden agenda to see him and fellow residents vacate their properties which are sited precariously close to the River Dee.

The latest twist in a long-running saga came after the council issued a direction against Mr Johnson's property and 25 others requesting that planning permission is sought even for matters such as erecting a gate or painting the exterior. The council says it wants to maintain the character of the area and prevent manmade alterations affecting the function of the flood plain.

Mr Johnson, who lives in Townfield Lane, said the council's ruling will have 'absolutely devastating consequences' for the 26 properties: 'It is totally restrictive on every single aspect of what we can do to our homes.

'In effect even to paint the house or put up a new gate each property will have to first put in a planning application and wait for permission which it's obvious will never come...they just want everyone to 'up sticks' and leave really,' he claimed.

Mr Johnson has now organised a meeting of affected residents, who live in Townfield Lane, River Lane and Denamere Lane, for Monday at 7pm in the Farndon Arms where he hopes everyone will be prepared to 'stand up and be counted'.

Mr Johnson's troubles began in 2000 when his bungalow was flooded three times, affecting the structure and resulting in £20,000 renovation work.

He put in a planning application to raise his home and in July 2001 was granted retrospective permission to raise the property and install a sewage treatment plant. But he raised the land around the house as well and was told to reinstate the ground as before - meaning he would need a ladder to get through his front door. He is now challenging the decision. He applied for leave to appeal against the decision of the inquiry but this failed. Mr Johnson, who says he has spent tens of thousands of pounds on legal fees, is now challenging the decision using the European Human Rights Act.

The direction, under the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Developments Order 1995) was made on June 24 and will remain in force for six months from this date until approved or modified by the Secretary of State. Chester City Council spokesman Mike McGivern said: 'The purpose of this ruling was two-fold: to maintain the character of the area - that's why they are not allowed to build extensions or alter windows. The second thing is to maintain the water flows and flood patterns as they exist now because extensions in the flood plain could alter the flooding risk.'

<https://www.dailypost.co.uk/news/local-news/just-want-up-sticks-leave-2908891>