

# Theo Chalmers



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## Don't feed the evil wolf. Cuddle up to the nice one

AN OLD Cherokee chief is teaching his grandson. "A terrible fight is going on inside me," he says "a fight between two wolves.

"One is evil - he is anger, envy, sorrow, regret, greed, arrogance, self-pity, guilt, resentment, inferiority, lies, false pride, superiority, and ego. The other is good - he is joy, peace, love, hope, serenity, humility, kindness, benevolence, empathy, generosity, truth, compassion, and faith. The same fight is going on inside you - and inside every other person, too."

The grandson thinks for a minute. "Which wolf will win?" he asks.

"The one you feed," the old man replies.

This is an old story but one that for some reason I have seen several times recently on social media. You might, reasonably, wonder what this uplifting yet fairly cheesy story has to do with my column. I will explain.

Sometimes companies act so unfairly that one can only assume the wrong wolf is being fed. Such a company is Abbey Development Ltd and this time the wolves' prey is the live music entertainment jewel The Stables in Wavendon, which is



The Stables Theatre, Wavendon

actually a charity, although that seems to make no difference to Abbey's baying pack.

Abbey bought the land neighbouring the long-established Stables - the very land where generations of musically gifted children stayed and worked at the hugely successful Stables Summer Camps - and quite reasonably wishes to develop it for housing. However in recent years whenever housing has appeared next to music or motor-racing venues the noise complaints have followed and the venues have

been forced to close.

The Stables is licensed seven days per week until 2am. Yes, it makes noise and no, there is no "We were here first" defence. The original application was for 134 dwellings with the so-called affordable homes right up to the fence of the car park with no sound mitigation such as a playground, trees and other sound barriers or permanently sealed double glazing facing the site.

It is almost inevitable that the people who eventually buy houses or flats here will be disturbed by the

noise of the performances and the audiences arriving and leaving late at night. After a wave of public objections to Abbey's plans, The Stables fought for a Deed of Easement of noise and won.

The easement allows the venue to transmit noise at existing levels across the development site notwithstanding that the noise might constitute a nuisance. The rights would benefit anyone lawfully occupying the venue and the freeholder and anyone occupying any part of the development site is bound by the venue's right to generate noise at the existing levels.

Abbey would be bound to tell prospective buyers of the noise potential and unless it was prepared to specify proper sound mitigation - such as has been done with housing land alongside the M1 where a bund (or earth mound) now exists sending a good deal of traffic noise skywards - it may have trouble shifting the units.

The existence of the easement meant that should a claim for nuisance be brought by a future occupier of Abbey's land, that claim would be expected to fail as the occupier is

bound by the deed and was cognisant of its existence when it acquired the residential unit. Abbey was told to reconfigure, it did and for a moment the good wolf won.

However, Abbey Development Ltd now refuses to accept the easement and has withdrawn the application. Then they submitted a second application. Abbey fed the bad wolf and appealed against the easement using lockdown to force written submissions only. A cynic, such as I, might assume that, by drawing this process out endlessly and at great cost for a venue currently shut due to Covid-19 restrictions, they are trying to drain The Stables of energy and cash in a time when it is only losing money. Its current legal fees are rumoured to have topped £100,000.

Now government planning inspectors have suggested that because of high public interest perhaps only a public meeting is appropriate. We shall see. In the meantime, may I suggest Abbey Development Ltd stops feeding the evil wolf and starts cuddling up to the nice one.

Cheerio.

## Be our business buddy, says cancer charity

WHEN Alan Dumbell was receiving cancer treatment at Milton Keynes University Hospital, he was surrounded by his loving family. Yet he still felt lonely and lost at times. What he needed, he told his family, was a 'buddy' to support and help him where he felt things were missing.

It is his legacy to have such a cancer buddy scheme. With the passion of his daughter Suzanne Brown and support of Macmillan and MKUH, Al's Pals has been born.

The service is offered to all cancer patients in Milton Keynes. Suzanne has received no funding in setting up Al's Pals but the passion to support cancer patients in her father's memory inspires her to make the Al's Pals charity a success.

Al's Pals launched in March, one week

before the government imposed the lockdown due to the coronavirus pandemic. This has been a testing time for the charity, says Suzanne, and her volunteers are still supporting chemotherapy patients during their treatment by offering refreshments and chatting to them. "Sadly, the patients are not allowed visitors so to have someone to talk to is a relief and can help them take their minds off their treatment," she adds.

Al's Pals is looking for businesses to consider it for their Charity of the Year. The support will assist significantly in the charity's work supporting cancer patients.

"Our volunteers could offer them a cup of coffee, maybe bring them a magazine or a small gift," says Suzanne. "For those with a terminal prognosis, our aim is to provide a gift such as



Alan Dumbell enjoys a trip to New York.



Suzanne Brown with her late father on her wedding day.

afternoon tea or a theatre trip to hopefully make them smile. Cancer affects one in two people and we need as much support as possible. As a business you can help us to do that."

For more information on the Al's Pals charity or to receive a fundraising pack, call 07745 601047, email [info@alspalsmk.co.uk](mailto:info@alspalsmk.co.uk) or visit [www.alspalsmk.co.uk](http://www.alspalsmk.co.uk)

