

Sir

The Newport Golf Club planning fiasco (WT 12.2.20) is all about money. At least so your two pieces would suggest - the first asking where the windfall went, and the second reporting how keen the National Park were to point out that their own error incurred no financial penalty to the Authority, nor to the general public 'who suffered no tangible financial disadvantage'.

The problem is, it's not just the 'tangible' aspects which matter. The Park DMC member Julie James - AM and Minister for Housing no less - points to the reputational loss to the Authority. (Not that it will have any effect on our next Council Tax bills, I daresay). She is right. This debacle will do nothing to improve the already uneasy relationship between Newport's residents and its National Park Authority.

There is plenty of the intangible in this affair - and strangely enough, now apparently beyond the reach of a judicial review, or indeed any remedial action. Too much time has passed. Action would be costly, too risky. So - who should be accountable? Somewhat intangible again. The Park has admitted its failure; its solicitors have 'been magnanimous and agreed that it was their fault'; and as for the Park's chief executive, according to a letter of clarification I have seen from the Park's Monitoring Officer, "it is not for the authorised signatory, in this case the chief executive, to scrutinise each word of the agreement".

Two small words, then, suddenly missing from a professionally brokered agreement covering a Section 106 matter, undoubtedly an area in which lawyers tread extra carefully with good reason. Yet not picked up on until six years later.

Your last word comes from the chief executive himself. "It's one we didn't do right."

Carry on Planning.

Sincerely

(Name & Address Supplied)