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**Transparency is the Key**

The recent ‘Police raid’ in Arboleas has generated a great deal of media interest, leading to the AUAN being asked to comment on the situation. The AUAN are unable to comment directly about the case, because we are not party to what is happening there. However, the steady revelation of cases of alleged urban abuse in the Almanzora Valley, and throughout Andalucia, no longer surprises the AUAN. What is a surprise, this time, is that an authority controlled by the PSOE no longer seems to be immune.

The AUAN was refused access to see the recently published proposals for the Arboleas Town Plan when it was announced. ALL authorities must accept that TRANSPARENCY IS THE KEY to ensure that future problems of this nature are avoided.

The Almanzora Valley continues to struggle with the massive illegality (11,000 properties according to the Juntas own figures). This overbuilding has been a disaster for everybody. 50% of our members are still without mains electricity and /or mains water. The Junta has shown itself to be totally incompetent – first in failing to control the development, and now in failing to resolve the problem. We now hear politicians stating how the expats must pay for the infrastructure.....we have already paid! We hear politicians excuses for not solving the problem...’the law is the law’. Good Governments change bad laws!

The courts seem powerless to redress the injustices and punish those responsible for the chaos. Cases brought for fraud against builders and corrupt, or incompetent, solicitors are lost in the mountain of similar actions, the cases dragging on for years. The demolition of the Prior’s home, without compensation, continues to cause outrage amongst the expat community.....and their case continues to drag through the courts! 2 years after their home was demolished, these Pensioners are still living in their garage.

The damage to Spain’s reputation that has been done by incompetent authorities over the last 8 years is immeasurable. Only an open and transparent urban planning regime will convince expats that it is safe to invest their savings in Spanish property again.