

## Divide and ignore

There are approximately 2,500 residents in San Miguel de Salinas most of whom live on the outlying urbanisations and communities. Of those residents 46.4 per cent are not Spanish and the number of non-Spanish residents is growing. Within the many communities and locales surrounding San Miguel urbanisation presidents and residents' representatives are all contacting the town hall with their various problems. Karen Landon, president of the Alda del Monte community, would like as many residents' representatives in and around San Miguel to contact her. She said, "Each president goes to the town hall with their community's problems sees a council official, explains the problem and nothing seems to get done. I think we need to unite our efforts so we get the best out of our elected town hall." Karen is volunteering to coordinate this unified effort. She would like all community leaders to contact her so that she can arrange a meeting. "We need to get a list of all the things that need to be put right and then in our beautiful town of San Miguel and then send three representatives to the town hall to bargain from a position of strength. We need to be able to say, 'This is what 1,500 of your registered voters want.' That way we can coordinate our efforts."

**Feeling left out?  
Town hall not  
listening? Call  
Karen.**



Karen says that there are overall problems and many communities within the municipality of San Miguel must be complaining about the same sort of thing, "Things like the water quality, broken street lighting, the condition of some of the roads, dog fouling and now rats are appearing. These were all things raised in our AGM of just 36 houses and other communities must share the same complaints." In the little community of Alda del Monte, with just 36 houses, there are Spanish, British, German, Dutch, Icelandic and South African residents. It appears that the town hall is dividing and ignoring their international community. If you represent an urbanisation, a community, a local within the San Miguel de Salinas municipality then contact Karen on 966 791 926 or email on karenlandon21@hotmail.com. She would really appreciate it and in the long run so might you and your residents.

*M Tissington.*

## Letters....

**Dear Ed,**

It beats me how Independent expatriate led political parties in Javea, Orihuela Costa and possibly San Miguel de Salinas expect to achieve their objectives. Come May 2007 and the local election season more may have blossomed. None of them seem to have thought matters through.

When I became a councillor in the UK a member of the party acted as my mentor and guided me through procedures. Newly elected expatriate councillors here are unlikely receive help and proceedings will probably leave them at a loss.

There are problems in San Miguel de Salinas. Angry residents intend to help themselves and are founding a new party. An organiser tells us they need to send three representatives to the town hall so as to negotiate from a position of strength. She does not realise that as a minor opposition group they will occupy a position of weakness and be outvoted at every turn.

The new parties appear to have adopted British customs and practices and applied them to Spain, ignoring differences such as party lists. More important however, these expatriates seem unaware that in Spain each councillor represents the whole municipality and not a ward or specific area as in the UK. Hence, expatriate independent parties aiming to represent limited areas will be mistrusted. Amongst the problems they aim to rectify mention is made of water and street lighting. This will be understood as meaning that the quality is better in one part of the municipality than another. Albeit unintentionally,

the expatriates give rise to a climate of "them and us" and consequently will be regarded as wishing to divert resources in favour of their own section of the community.

One of the new party organisers wants to go along to the town hall with a list of complaints and say "this is what 2,000 registered voters want" Independent parties have a poor achievement record. Better results can be accomplished by working through existing structures and the Spanish political system. The chances of success would be enhanced by drawing the attention of the mayor and his party to the number of votes at stake. Put matters quite plainly. A little vulgarity might be in order. No need exists to mince words. Tell'em to attend to the complaints or else.

Reference might be made to LBJ who claimed it "better to have an opponent inside the tent pissing out than outside the tent pissing in".

**Kind Regards  
Owen Thomas**

# COMMUNITY SPIRIT IN ALDEA DEL MONTE

By Georgina Baker

**RTN has been approached by Karen Landon, resident of San Miguel to assist with efforts to locate committee members of local communities.**

Karen lives in a small community of 36 houses, within the borders of San Miguel de Salinas. On June the 12th they held their AGM at the Cheers Bar in Eagles Nest and it soon became apparent that the issues facing this small community were bigger than first anticipated and would most definitely affect surrounding communities also. Inspired by the Orihuela Costa Presidents, who have formed a group in order to have more impact and to deal more successfully with their Ayuntamiento, residents of San Miguel are hoping to be able to do the same.

Karen commented, "At the moment, individual presidents go to the Town Hall in San Miguel with their various requests and complaints. Nothing much is achieved, the Town Hall simply throws up its collective hands in horror. Whether this is due to misunderstanding or simply becoming fed-up, is unknown. What we do know is that communities are passed over or 'fobbed off'. The person assigned to sort



San Miguel

out the issues or the situation is often ineffective and seems to be merely a PR effort on behalf of the Town Hall to placate. This results in, (unfortunately for the Ayuntamiento) further frustration and the problems escalate."

As a community, members of the AGM believe that the best course of action is to unite as many Presidents, Vice-Presidents and Vocals as possible from the satellite communities and cross-reference their concerns in order to establish which are common across all of the local communities. They would then like to elect perhaps three spokespersons or presidents who will liaise directly with the Town Hall and the communities. The purpose of this approach is to provide

the Town Hall with a concise report about the needs of the communities whilst not 'bombarding' them with countless individual requests. It is hoped that this method will be more effective and time efficient for both sides and will continue to foster good relationships between them.

With the help of RTN's wide distribution network, Karen hopes this appeal will reach the appropriate people, "Otherwise it means driving around, knocking on doors and hoping for the best." The community in San Miguel de Salinas is truly cosmopolitan with representatives from England, Germany, Belgium, South Africa, Ireland, Iceland, The Netherlands and, of course, Spain hoping to unite in a common cause.