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The Space Invaders from outer Lapland?

COULD a suspected UFO sighting above a Gwent council's offices be an omen of other-worldly retribution for the Scrooge-like councillors' decision to sack Santa?

Was it the ghost of Christmas future coming to earth to warn the hum-buggers that Christmas could be cancelled for them as well as visitors to their civic centre?

Two eye-witnesses said the strange flashing object they saw above Pontllan-fraith Civic Centre looked like a huge star-shaped Christmas light.

It seems too much of a coincidence that the sighting was made in the week when Islwyn borough full council ratified the decision not to site a festive grotto in a corner of the civic centre's reception area.

The grotto was axed after councillors decided youngsters queuing to meet Father Christmas would pose a security risk and agreed with their officers that the cost of dispensing gifts would be "prohibitive".

By David Wilkes

Roy Lewis, of Pentwyn-mawr, was driving past in his car when he spotted two lights in the sky about half a mile above the council offices at 5.35pm on Monday.

He stopped and watched what he believed to be a flying saucer flying away.

He said: "It seemed to be hopping, travelling about 500 metres each hop and flashing like a star. But there was no sound, so I don't think it can have been a helicopter or a plane.

"It was just stunning to watch and so bright. It was something out of the ordinary, but I don't know what."

Victoria Davies, who was in the car with him, said: "I have never seen anything like it — it was so odd. The speed it travelled was incredible, yet it was so quiet."

Rumours that councillors' absences from this week's full meeting were due to extra-terrestrial intervention remain unconfirmed.