

Presentation of Petition to Newark & Sherwood District At Full Council Meeting: 21 May 2019

‘Save the Trees bordering the Site of the Bearings and Lime Grove’



Introduction

We are a group of residents from Lime Grove and other like minded predominantly local people, campaigning to ‘Save the Trees bordering the Site of the Bearings and Lime Grove.’

Our online petition reached over 500 signatures in 48 hours showing strong public support. We have 689 online and 56 hand-signed signatures (With double signatures removed, a total of 736). Residents of every house that will be directly affected have signed the paper petition.

We understand the need for developing affordable housing; we don’t have a problem with this, but we need to preserve the trees that we can, for our own mental health and well-being, as well as for the environment. We also need to be able to live happily with our neighbours.

Background

The previous Planning Committee unanimously approved the application to build 62 residential dwellings on the Bearings site (18/00973/FULM).

During the consultation, the Town Council objected to the application due to: 'the removal of trees on the site boundary with no plans to replace them.'

The Tree Officer, another consultee, voiced concerns that can be summed up as follows:

Too many houses

Too close to trees

Too many trees removed, not enough space to replant

But legally okay

We are told that 140 letters were delivered to residents bordering the Site, advising them of the planning application.

Of the 19 Lime Grove houses directly impacted:

Only 3 objected. Only 3 understood.

Most people read the wrong document. There were over 60. They read the one called: Tree Schedule.

No face to face meeting had been offered so that they could understand.

Everyone has been upset.

Lots of letters have been flying around.

The Council has defended its position, saying it abided by legal requirements. The consultation window is 'now closed'.

The privacy issues had been adequately addressed through the type of windows to be fitted in the new houses overlooking the Lime Grove gardens. The distance between houses and loss of trees normal for that kind of place. Poor folk don't need the luxury of wildlife corridors that have been part of their lives for decades.

One cannot deny that somehow, the planning process has failed to extract the informed views of the people it will affect the most.

The reasons why people want to save the trees

So why did the online petition attract not just 500 signatures in 48 hours, but 25 pages of comments?

The easiest way to answer this is to read it:

“Please keep the trees for our wellbeing.”

“We didn’t realise you were going to take all the trees directly behind the house. Please don’t.”

“The trees [offer] protection from pollution, and sound screening.”

“The trees are a haven for wildlife, which will be even more critical once the site is developed.”

“The development should respect and work with the existing plant and animal life, even if this means that a few less properties are built.”

What does this say about the Planning Process?

It is possible that in trying to do the right thing, we end up doing wrong.

What is the Current Status of the Petition?

The developers have agreed to not cut the trees down and a planning amendment has been submitted and is available for public consultation.

However, no protection was initially offered for the trees during and after site development. This means the trees could be killed by root damage during site construction. They could also be felled by new owners who might not like them. **The trees are not yet saved, but with your help they could be.**

Challenge to the Council

Trees are good for people

Council under pressure to build more houses

This shouldn’t be at the cost of our environment

You need to challenge developers more

Engage the people of the town in what you have previously seen as ‘your decision making.’

And finally, to survive the threat of catastrophic climate breakdown, we are going to need all the trees we can get.

An electronic version of this presentation is available from Nigel Hill.

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