



Dear Sirs

I am writing to you in response to your Consultation on the Future Development of Sherwood Forest on behalf of Sherwood Forest Friends of the Earth. We felt the need to write our comments in a letter as the consultation survey did not allow us to adequately convey our views and ideas.

The initial reaction to the whole proposal is business as usual that is typical of the majority of the tourist attractions in the UK but with a Robin Hood emphasis. However we feel that there is a totally missed opportunity to do something special which would pioneer a new way of attracting tourism but in a way that is more in line with what we need for the future in the current pandemic economy and with the threat of extinction through climate change. Our first thoughts were that there does not seem to be enough emphasis on the preservation of the wildlife, ecology, nature and the environment.

We recognise that there are some good points especially with regard to moving the car park for the cemetery. Many visitors to Sherwood Forest are using the cemetery car park, the craft centre car park, and the village car parks to avoid paying the visitors centre public car park fees and having to walk from the current car park. Locking the barrier to the cemetery car park in the early evening has caused considerable distress for people whose relatives are buried there when the only time they have to visit is in the evenings. We would welcome creating a new car park especially if it meant that it was no longer accessed via Forest Corner. It has been felt from the start that it is inappropriate and distressing for mourners for the funeral cortege to have to share the entrance route to the Visitors centre. This would be exacerbated by the increases in tourism that these development proposals hope to generate.

Many of the local residents feel that when the new visitors centre was opened that we had lost the identification with Robin Hood, and that not enough was being made about the History of the area and the Robin Hood story. However the planet is facing a climate and biodiversity crisis which is already starting to impact our lives, through fires, drought, regional temperature anomalies, and is already affecting global food supplies. So we would welcome any ideas which would combine more of the history of the village and the Robin Hood story with education on how we live in the future less materialistically and how we deal with and face the Climate Change crisis.

The industrial revolution, triggered the causes of these crises, and there is now urgent need to change our way of approaching nature. This is a relatively recent phenomenon in the long existence of Sherwood Forest, standing as it has since ancient times. It is imperative that environmental considerations are a priority when considering all future development. The plans seem to indicate that a number of trees would have to be removed to make room for the expansion. We believe that ideas for this ancient and precious area of woodland should be based around preservation not destruction. This is especially important at a time when woodlands may be the key to a better future for us all, primarily because of the carbon sequestration function and also as important wildlife havens in a time of rapidly diminishing levels of species biodiversity.

Tourism may be of economic benefit to the area, but what is in this proposal will come at a cost of impact on the both environment and local resources. Many local businesses are already struggling to keep their heads above water in the current economic climate caused by the Covid 19 pandemic. There are elements in the



suggested events and activities in the consultation literature that would create more competition for local businesses, such as the local produce market, craft events, and the fitness, wellbeing and training proposals. Increasing these opportunities in the Sherwood Forest complex would put further strain on the local businesses which may end up being the final straw to their survival.

When we are facing a climate and biodiversity crisis, in order to justify such development, we feel that all efforts should be made to keep the impact on the environment low, and contribute to the mitigation of future climate impacts. We would suggest that this could be achieved through using the opportunity for public education, use of renewable and sustainable technology and passing on of resilience skills.

Activities should be geared towards educating visitors on the importance of adopting new ways of living for humans that are in harmony with and beneficial to our natural world and planned attractions should be based upon this tenet, eg The Eden Project. Instead of continuing with “business as usual”, pioneer the new ways we need to adopt for a better future, such as emphasising the need to move away from monoculture in local agriculture and its impacts on soil health; the need to plant more trees; the growing need to re-learn some of the old skills from Robin Hood’s time that could be useful again, that didn’t require electricity!

We believe that a few of the ideas such as the glamping and Segways are too gimmicky and commercial for a site of Natural beauty and an SSSI and will inevitably affect the environment. The plans seem to show that the fairground to have been incorporated into one of the areas earmarked for expansion and regeneration. The fairground is a 300 year old tradition in Edwinstowe and the residents have shown in the past that they would be vehemently opposed to losing such an institution.

Traffic, Transport and parking are already a problem and we do not think they will cope with increased tourism so we are suggesting that more innovative ideas need to be considered. E,g setg up car parks outside the village, as “park and ride”. Provide transport to ferry tourists from the car parks to the forest. This would be even more ideal if it could be environmentally friendly, possibly something along the lines of the bicycle buses used on the continent and being trialled in Cambridge.

Our suggestion would be that the main considerations in approaching any development should be:

- Approached from a viewpoint of protection of existing wildlife habitats and, wherever possible, enhancement, for the benefit of existing ecosystem resilience, rather than seeing the Forest as a resource to be exploited.
- Environmental protection should be taken as the starting point, and ideas for future development should flow from that anchor.
- Future planned activities should be developed from a zero carbon, low emission, zero impact on biodiversity viewpoint. They should also take into consideration what is already available in the village so that businesses are not given additional competition
- All new build should be planned from a zero emission standpoint, using recycled materials/Passiv House/renewable energy type of technology for low environmental impact in any development ideas.
- Encourage public transport use instead of private cars, and develop safe cycle lanes around Edwinstowe and the Forest itself to encourage low emission forms of transport.

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- Any future development should not involve the destruction of any trees or established ecosystems within the Sherwood Forest area.
- Visitor disturbance in the Nature Reserve and SSSI should not be considered and there should be no off-track activities in this area. Nature is the priority in this area, not the visitor.

If the aim is to increase visitor numbers to the area all year round, the impact of this on wildlife should be thoroughly assessed before plans are drawn up, so that all possible mitigating measures are incorporated.

This could be the opportunity for Nottinghamshire to lead the way in environmentally sound development for the leisure industry, taking imperative first steps in meeting the challenges of a future shadowed by the climate emergency.

We hope that you will consider our comments and perhaps review the approach you are considering to the development of this area for the future.

If you wish to discuss the contents of this document further please do not hesitate to contact me, contact details are given below.

Yours Sincerely

Ms Pauline Meechan

On behalf of Sherwood Forest Friend of the Earth