

I object in the strongest terms to application No2022/62/92406/W, the building of 10 affordable homes on land off Chapelgate.

I have been a Scholes resident since 1987,

Green Belt

The proposed piece of land is a haven for wildlife. We regularly see foxes, hedgehogs, badgers, frogs, toads, rabbits, hares and, when we are lucky, deer. During twilight hours, at this time of year, we see a great many bats. These are especially plentiful at the moment. The biodiversity study shows that Soprano Pipistrelle bats have been present in the search area. These are of Principal Importance. I understand that bats are a protected species and they cannot be intentionally disturbed in their natural habitat, if this disturbance might impact the bat's ability to survive, breed, rear or nurture their young. Given the amount of bats flying in, out and around the Chipping's site, I am very concerned for their safety!

There are many birds nesting in the trees on the site, including some of Principal Importance. During the 2022 report, Blackbird, Robin, Sparrow and Blue Tit were all recorded with some collecting nesting materials. The 2021 survey recorded Great Tit and Goldfinch. There only appear to be 3 trees left. What damage will that do to the bird population? The present vegetation on the site is suitable for a variety of bird species to nest. The nests, eggs and nesting of all wild birds are protected from disturbance, damage and destruction, under the Wildlife & Countryside Act. The report warns that doing any of these, could result in a legal offence.

The report can also not conclusively rule out the presence of reptiles on the site and as reptiles are also protected from killing and injury, under the above act, they say that the likelihood of such an offence under this legislation, should be considered.

The proposals will mean a 53.91% loss of biodiversity on the site. Most of the existing habitats will be lost according to the report. It also states that the proposals on site will not comply with national and local planning law!

For this proposal to achieve a net gain of 10% biodiversity gain, enhancements of offsite land is needed. This has to be gained with permission from the landowners. One of these absolutely ridiculous ones is to use a 5.5 m x 85.5m long strip of the school\community playing field. It will be used to plant wildflowers and new trees. Now this field is already covered in grass and is well used by local children and adults for sporting activities. Aspiring young athletes use it to train on. In a time where sport is being encouraged, it is absolute nonsense to consider losing any of it!

The site is well used by local people. Children ride their bikes, play on it, explore, learn about nature, and just enjoy being children on it. A group of local school children scattered their bee bombs, given to them by HVPC, on it earlier this year. It is used by walkers and has had a pathway going through it for at least 70 years. A long standing resident kept chickens on it for many years.

This green belt was, as far as I understand, given to HVPC for use by the people of Scholes. Indeed, I'm told by a lot of the older residents, that it is community land, even though HVPC have given it to HVLC. The fact that HVLC have now given it to EcoHolmes for a peppercorn rent of £2,000 per year, without the agreement of the community, doesn't seem fair.

This green belt should be treated like the old quarry at Wooldale. A friends of group should be created and it should be left for the people of Scholes to enjoy, as was the intention. During the consultation of the Holme Valley Development plan, there was a clear message from 89% of residents, who thought new building on a brownfield site should take priority over green field sites. To my knowledge, this site is not on the plan! The Holme Valley Development plan has stipulated that the protection of nature and eco-systems need to be protected, especially regarding the

present climate and biodiversity emergency, we are now experiencing. This proposal certainly doesn't fit with this statement!

Green belt is a very precious commodity in these times of out of control development. Indeed, a survey carried out for the people of the Holme Valley in Your Voice, says that, and I quote "for house building to be on brownfield sites only." We have a brownfield site at Jackson Bridge. Green belt should be left alone. The loss of so many years of biodiversity that then has to be replaced elsewhere is madness. It will take years for the wildlife to recover.

To quote Holme Valley Parish Council, from an objection to a housing development in Scholes in 2016, "Green Belt land should not be touched at any price."

Dangerous Site Location

The location of this site is completely unsuitable for a housing development of any kind. It is not even suitable for one large detached house. This is not about affordable housing, this is about preserving lives! It sits adjacent to a bad bend, at the top of a hill. There are no pavements at all on either side until you reach just before Oak Scar Lane. Young families for years, have run the gauntlet, of getting their children to playgroup and school safely. I am one of those that have had to jump into the bushes with my children. I am now having to negotiate this with my grandchildren.

Resident's cars and vans park on both sides, narrowing the road. Families with pushchairs have to dodge in between these to walk up and down the road. It becomes even busier in the summer, with all the cricket traffic, and at times, a fire engine would struggle to get through! It is very busy at the T junction at the end of White wells road at school times. Cars have to swing into the middle of the road to get round the corner from Chapelgate as it is a tight bend. The road survey was most definitely not a true reflection of the speed, as it was carried out after days of heavy rain and in the winter, during school holidays, without works traffic included! Local villagers regularly have to jump into the long grass to avoid being hit.

The addition of potentially 20 more vehicles and their visitors 3 spaces, will impact greatly on this stretch of road. Add to those, all the delivery vans, taxis, delivery lorries, dustbin waggons and excess visitor traffic, this already dangerous bend will become a death trap. Excess visitor traffic will end up on parking on Chapelgate, making the situation even more dangerous. It will be extremely difficult for pedestrians to exit the site, especially ones with pushchairs and young children. The elderly will have no chance! It's a ludicrous.

The transport survey says that the new footpath around the site will tie into the existing footway at the northwest corner of the site. There is no existing footway! It also has used TRICS to guesstimate, how many vehicles will exit and enter the site at any one time. If there are no school places in Scholes if this goes ahead, there will be far more cars exiting the site to take children to neighbouring village schools.

What a ludicrous and discriminatory piece in 4.1.3 of the survey. They say that one of the houses is a wheelchair user dwelling, and I quote "given this type of occupant, there will be a lower car ownership and resultantly, lower traffic impact." I'm sure all wheelchair users will be up in arms at this statement. I personally know of several people without some or all limbs that are very competent drivers and car owners! How condescending and offensive. Due to having to accommodate a wheelchair, the vehicle is usually a large van, which dispels that theory! Furthermore we already have a wheelchair user living nearby and this person relies on a lot of physical help, so there is, at certain times of the day, more cars and vans.

Flooding

The Chipping's site badly floods. We are led to believe that it is because of tarmac, left by KMC. Long standing Scholes residents, living opposite the site for over 70 years will tell you that it has always flooded, especially close to Deanbridge. Covering it completely with tarmac and buildings will cause more flooding. During heavy rain, water cascades down Chapelgate from Oak Scar Lane. It is like a river. It has caused numerous potholes over the years. It continues its journey down into the bottom of Deanbridge, which regularly floods. There was a severe flood there during last winter that had a catastrophic effect downstream at Jackson Bridge and the complete closure of Deanbridge, which was impassable. The drains cannot cope now, never mind adding 10 more houses. Yorkshire water are endorsing the use of an existing drain on the eastern site of the site, but this drain cannot do its job now. The road gullies are already overflowing on a regular basis, so adding the extra development to the already insufficient sewerage system is going to make this a serious recurring problem.

Infrastructure

Scholes village has grown at an alarming rate over the years. We have seen a massive rise in traffic, since we moved here. Driving through the village centre is now very difficult, due to all the parked cars, but also the increase in traffic. There are many narrow roads and I am one of many residents to get my wing mirror knocked off. Access to Scholes via Cross Lane is difficult and narrow and impassable in ice and snow. Paris now has many parked cars and it is a terrible bottleneck from Cherry Tree Walk all the way to Jackson Bridge. The road is a daily slalom, cars diving in and out of gaps to make progress and avoid oncoming cars. I witnessed a bus and lorry trying to pass each other, with cars following closely behind each vehicle and it took 10 minutes of very careful driving to pass. Earlier in the day a car had his wing mirror hit on St George's road and the occupants of the damaged car, turned around and chased back to confront the other driver! As I carried on walking my dog, they were in the middle of a very angry exchange with one car parked in the middle of the road, blocking it, with his hazards flashing! This is an all too common occurrence, with drivers being so frustrated at the sheer volume of vehicles. The only safe, wide route to Holmfirth is via Scholes Moor Road up to Hade Edge, but then you have to frequently join a mile long queue into Town. The roads are saturated with traffic. There has been a lot of development in Scholes and if this carries on, we will be one big town!

There are no NHS dentist places, no doctor's places and no school places. All this means that new residents are going to add to more traffic chaos, as they drive from this area to find these amenities. This all adds to more traffic, which is most definitely not ECO friendly.

Scholes had another power disruption earlier this year, where a lot of houses were without power for several days. It has suffered from frequent power disruption to the power supplies over the years. Adding more houses will only make this problem worse.

Affordable Homes

This proposal has 10 houses all to rent. When a private developer builds a housing development, a proportion of these houses must be affordable. Why are these 10 proposed homes not divided into 5 to buy and 5 to rent? There are many people in Scholes who would love to get on the property ladder, where they grew up, not have to move out of the area, away from family and work to buy their first home. LP11 states that developments of 10 or more dwellings, should have 20% affordable

homes. Why then is this not the case in reverse? My children have all had to move outside of the area to buy their own homes, despite their parents living here for 40 years. Why aren't the needs of all Scholes residents being met with this proposal?

EcoHolmes state that all people must have a local connection to rent these homes, yet the planning office has said that they are to be for the people of Scholes. I was told by this company that they will be for people from anywhere within Kirklees, dependant on need. HVPC/HVLC are saying from within the Holme Valley. Which is it? If the planning committee, completely ignore local opinion and pass this proposal, they should of course go to Scholes villagers.

This whole proposal is under the guise of an eco friendly development, and yes, the designs look that way, even down to an electric car charging point (though very few people can afford to buy an electric car!) that nobody will probably ever use. The impact on the environment however is anything but eco friendly. They are proposing to destroy an area, that will wipe out all natural habitats, that will take years to recover and that will be offsite. They are adding to the flooding, already present in this area, they are encouraging many more vehicles to use narrow, congested roads and at what price? It must be costing millions to build 10 homes! Why are they not making some of the thousands of empty houses into eco homes, like the project on Abbey Road in Fartown. Why not use one of the many brownfield sites in the Holme Valley, one less than half a mile from this site. We asked all these questions and were told that the Chipping's site is free! No one has yet made the cost of these houses public or who is funding them and I feel that before this application is considered, this should be disclosed.

I attended a Holme Valley Parish Council meeting on Monday 15th August. It was revealed that all the Parish Councillors on the planning Committee are Trustees of the owners of the Chipping's site, Holme Valley Land Charity. They all declared a personal interest with a show of hands and said they were unable to pass comment on this application. They said they would inform Kirklees of a certain standard wording, but we objected to that. They then confirmed a different format, so as not to imply a rubber stamp without comment. I am extremely concerned that there is no democratic process available for Holmfirth residents, who pay a levy to the Parish Council!

An elected Kirklees councillor is on the Kirklees Strategic Planning Committee. The same committee that will make a decision on this application. Until March 2021, he was a director of EcoHolmes. Standing down at that late stage, should not detract from the fact that he has a personal interest in this application. Whether or not he abstains, he should be replaced by another councillor from outside the Holme Valley, who is completely impartial, otherwise, abstaining is a vote lost.

IN the survey circulated by Eco Holmes, only 58 of the 155 responses came from Scholes residents, with only 3 of these making a supporting comment, yet they joined these figures in their summary with " close to Scholes in a Neighbouring village." This made it appear that more Scholes residents were in favour. Nowhere in their survey, did they say it was to be built on Green belt land. They didn't ask what else the land could be used for. They certainly didn't say that the HVPC were trustees of the Land Charity, the owners of the site!

Save our Scholes Greenbelt group produced a questionnaire that asked all these questions and more. They were delivered to as many houses in Scholes as possible. They will be added to the objections and I implore the planning committee, to look at what Scholes residents are saying.

I also ask the planning committee to look at all the postcodes on the comments. I have found on social media that most of the supporters of this project do not live in Scholes village.

I respectfully ask that this application be refused and that you listen to the Scholes residents. All the surveys and reports in the world cannot give you the information that people living near the site can!

Can you please acknowledge receipt of this email and confirm it has been logged and passed to the relevant officer?

In addition to sending my personal comments here I wish Kirklees Planning Department to record my support for the detailed comments being made by Save Our Scholes Green Belt residents group.

Kind Regards

63, Chapelgate, Scholes, Holmfirth, HD9 1SX