

Proof of evidence

Statement of

1. I reside at Storthes Hall Lane, between the nearby villages of Kirkburton and Farnley Tyas.
2. I am a founding trustee of the Garganey Trust, a conservation charity that manages four nature reserves across Yorkshire.
3. One of these is Thunder Bridge Meadows. I have known the site for more than thirty years and have been involved with its management as a nature reserve since it was acquired by the Trust around 2007.
4. The site contains a rich mixture of habitats such as semi-natural woodland, meadows and scrub as well as Thunder Bridge Dike itself. It hosts a variety of plants and animals including locally rare species such as wood crane's-bill (*Geranium sylvaticum*) and other wildflowers such as wood anemone (*Anemone nemorosa*), bluebell (*Hyacinthoides non-scripta*), meadow cranesbill (*Geranium pratense*), and meadowsweet (*Filipendula ulmaria*). It is also home to numerous types of bird, butterfly and mammal. Despite its proximity to Penistone Road the site is secluded and is popular with walkers.
5. The value of Thunder Bridge Meadows for nature conservation is reflected in its designation in Kirklees Local Plan as a Local Wildlife Site and part of the Wildlife Habitat Network
6. Garganey Trust previously lodged an objection to this development in these terms:

The Garganey Trust owns land in Thunder Bridge, on the west side of Thunder Bridge Dike. Our land is regularly subject to discharges from a number of manholes along the combined sewer that runs through our land. The frequency and severity of the discharges has increased markedly in recent years and we have had no substantive response to the complaints we have made to Yorkshire Water. The discharges are unsightly, unpleasant and are damaging to the wildlife and ecology of our land and especially Thunder Bridge Dike.

The combined sewer overflow that causes the discharges on our land has insufficient capacity to accommodate both the sewage from properties connected to the system and the surface water runoff from the catchment it serves.

The Garganey Trust objects to this development proposal as it would add sewage from a further 50 properties to the CSO system and worsen the existing discharges and contamination of our land. As Yorkshire Water have understandably refused connection for surface water drainage, this could result in direct discharge to Stone Wood Dike, which eventually feeds into Thunder Bridge Dike, adding to the increasing storm peak flows.

As the proposed development site at Stocksmoor is not an allocation for the life of the current plan we object to this application and consider it essential that there is a comprehensive upgrading of the current local sewage and surface water drainage systems before any further development in the catchment is permitted.

7. In this statement, I would add a little more detail what I have observed at Thunder Bridge Meadows.
8. In this context, I have had sight of a Yorkshire Water sewer map (attached as Appendix A to this statement). The combined sewer from Stocksmoor runs underground across Garganey Trust land. Just opposite the Woodman Inn, the Stocksmoor combined sewer is joined by the separate combined sewer that runs down Dam Hill from Shelley. The combined sewer runs on along the length of the Trust's reserve.

9. Appendix A shows manhole covers along the line of the combined sewer at Thunder Bridge Meadows. At times of heavy rainfall contaminated water issues from many of the manholes through the perforations in the covers or by the force of the water lifting the covers (see photos in Appendix B). The effluent flows back into the dike leaving solids in its wake. This now happens with such frequency and the discharge volume is so great that the discharged contaminated water has scoured a channel into the bank of the dike, leaving fence posts suspended (see photos).

10. When Thunder Bridge Meadows was acquired by the Garganey Trust as a nature reserve nearly twenty years ago, it was normal to see Brown Trout in the Dike. This is no longer the case. Children still often play in the Dike - they should probably no longer do so.

Appendix A continued



Appendix A continued



Appendix B







