

From:
To: [DCAdmin](#)
Subject: Objection to planning application 2021/91638, on behalf of Growing Newsome
Date: 08 June 2021 14:25:28

Hello,

Objection to planning application [2021/91638](#)

We're writing on behalf of our community organisation to object to planning application number [2021/91638](#), which proposes 22 dwellings on site of Newsome Mill Ponds and the land at Hart Street in Newsome, Huddersfield.

We know that Newsome Mill Ponds and the green space at Hart Street, including the former mill workers' allotments, are valued by the people who live here, and we want to see this land retained for community benefit.

Our food growing community has become one of the key organisations for local food sustainability in Kirklees, and we have a strong understanding of the importance of local food activities for both health and wellbeing, and for our local economy. People need access to land within our communities to be able to grow their own food and reconnect with nature, so they can experience all the benefits that brings. The former allotment site at Hart Street would be a valuable asset as a central community growing space. This is the kind of sustainable development that local residents and organisations would be keen to support.

Growing Newsome's previous community research and our community development experience has demonstrated what Newsome residents think about local food growing, about wildlife and about local green space. Whenever we have investigated the attitudes of local residents towards Newsome Mill Ponds and the land at Hart Street, the vast majority of people have told us that they want to see the open space retained for the benefit of local people and for wildlife. Local residents continue to be supportive of retaining this open space today, and tell us how much they value it.

Many of our members and participants live very close to this site, and we know how much it contributes to their wellbeing. This has been particularly noticeable during the Covid-19 pandemic, with the ability to watch wildlife on and around the ponds providing much needed relief for local people, including those who are working hard to support others, those who are living with mental and physical illness, and those who are grieving.

Near neighbours who benefit from the Mill Ponds include families with young children, adults with physical disabilities and older residents who live alone. Being able to spend time feeding the ducks and watching the other wildlife there creates opportunities for social contact and essential access to wildlife and green space. The steep geography of the surrounding area means that many of the people who benefit would find it difficult to access green spaces elsewhere. Retaining this open space in the centre of Newsome village is therefore important for people's wellbeing.

We're concerned that there is no ecological information as part of this planning application. We note the proposed small area of open space does not include a body of water and is positioned at the corner of the site closest to the busy junction of Newsome crossroads. There is no information about what the public open space would be like and how people and wildlife could use it. We would like to see detailed proposals for how wildlife would continue to be supported, including retaining some open water on the site.

Removing the wildlife habitat would have a negative impact, both on wildlife and on the health of local residents.

In the Kirklees Local Plan, adopted in February 2019, water environments are described as being important:

“Water environments in Kirklees are an important feature of the landscape. As well as their intrinsic value, they provide wildlife habitats and encourage biodiversity, provide opportunities for leisure and recreation and help alleviate flood risk. They can contribute positively towards the social, economic, environmental and health well being of communities.”

We feel that important landscape features should be kept for the benefit of the local community, especially where these features are also part of our local heritage, as are the Mill Ponds in Newsome.

Along with the two mill ponds and the former allotments for the mill workers, the site at Hart Street includes mature trees along present day Naomi Road, which are the subject of a Tree Preservation Order. Along with other groups in the area, we remain concerned about the affect that such a dense housing development would have on these protected trees. The Kirklees policy on trees indicates that this avenue of trees should be protected from development, given that it is part of the distinctiveness of Newsome village:

Trees - Policy LP 33

“The Council will not grant planning permission for developments which directly or indirectly threaten trees or woodlands of significant amenity. Proposals should normally retain any valuable or important trees where they make a contribution to public amenity, the distinctiveness of a specific location or contribute to the environment, including the Wildlife Habitat Network and green infrastructure networks.”

The combination of mature trees, water environments and urban green space on this site has created a good habitat for all kinds of wildlife, and a haven for the people who live nearby. This is an important counterpoint to the dense housing in the surrounding area, the busy main road alongside the site (linking Newsome with Huddersfield town centre), and the intended development of the wider Newsome Mills site for housing, with indicative capacity for 69 dwellings (as allocated in the Kirklees Local Plan).

Two Independent Planning Inspectors have previously commented on the impact that the loss of this open space would have:

“The openness of this previously undeveloped part of the site provides valuable visual relief in what is otherwise a fairly densely developed urban area... The loss of previously undeveloped open land resulting from the proposal would have an unacceptable impact on the character and appearance of the area.” [2009]

“The proposed development would cause harm to the character and appearance of the area.” [2017]

We feel that, today, there is nothing to outweigh these major concerns, given that there is an identified adequate supply of land for new and affordable housing in Kirklees.

Growing Newsome is a network representing hundreds of local residents. We want to make sure that our participants have a voice in what happens to this land, as we know from our research and experience how significant a site this is for the wellbeing of our community. The current proposals are very lacking in detail and do not address any of the

issues that we and other organisations and individuals have raised about similar proposals over a number of years. This leaves the people who live here feeling ignored in the planning process and fearful of the impact this development would have on their everyday lives.

We feel that the wellbeing of local residents and the impact on our local environment have not been considered in this proposal. We hope you will give careful consideration to these issues and we hope that you will refuse planning application number [2021/91638](#).

Yours sincerely,

Growing Newsome