



## MERROW RESIDENTS' ASSOCIATION

[www.merrowresidents.org.uk](http://www.merrowresidents.org.uk)

Chairman Keith C Meldrum, CB, The Orchard, Swaynes Lane, Merrow, Guildford, Surrey GU1 2XX

Tel: 01483 565197

[chairman@merrowresidents.org](mailto:chairman@merrowresidents.org)

---

Planning Inspectorate  
Commons Team  
3F Temple Key  
Bristol  
BS1 6PN

25<sup>th</sup> June 2017

Dear Sir or Madam,

### **Title: Common Land at Albury Downs, Newlands Corner. (CL344)**

I write on behalf of the Merrow Residents' Association (MRA). The MRA represents over 600 households in Merrow which lies close to Newlands Corner. At our last AGM on 27<sup>th</sup> March 2017 attended by nearly 160 people the following resolution was approved.

***Resolution-*** that the MRA determined at its AGM on the 27th March that it must do everything possible to dissuade Surrey County Council from spending money on a play trail and any further developments at Newlands Corner since any such spend is not only unnecessary but also wasteful.

Feelings were clearly very strong in wanting to keep the site natural, the way it is now, with no additional development of any kind. The planning application to allow play structures at Newlands Corner goes completely against that natural state of the common land. Our membership have many and various reasons for the objections and a summary of them are shown below.

- Our membership and many other people have made it abundantly clear that they do not want play structures. The area already provides activity, interest, beauty and a place to spend quality time. If children wish to use play structures there are many other options in the close local area for them to visit. The whole joy of Newlands Corner is its natural beauty and environment.

- Adding play structures to Newlands corner would be an erosion of the common to no good purpose. There is no benefit to the commons area. The natural environment already provides more play opportunities than the structures ever would. Additionally the structures would be a distraction from nature.
- Newlands Corner is an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB). The Guardians of this land have a duty to conserve and enhance the area and it's natural beauty.
- The AONB requirement for low-key, long-term action to protect AONB areas, does not fit in with the plan to attract more visitors and increase vehicle number from 255,000 to 365,000 per year over 4 years. This intensity of visitors and cars would damage the environment at Newlands Corner and make the A25 even more dangerous. This AONB should not be a theme park.
- "Quiet enjoyment" is one of the main aims of AONB status. Newlands Corner's character would be irretrievably changed by a series of play structures.
- The neighbourhood would suffer increased traffic, associated increased pollution and displacement parking due to overcrowding of the site.
- The site is Green Belt land and any infill on the Green Belt should only take place in "very special circumstances". Erosion of Green Belt land is not in the interests of the neighbourhood or the wider population.
- The play structures would completely change the character and nature of the existing common, by turning it into an artificial attraction, whereas, given the legislative responsibilities placed on authorities, the focus should be on managing, improving and protecting the natural environment.
- There will be a loss of existing use and future use and enjoyment. The all-ability trail is currently much loved and used by all kinds of people and is the only place where disabled people, the elderly, those with disabilities or dementia and people with pushchairs can go for an easy walk (or ride) through natural, quiet woodland.
- There would be a seriously-adverse effect on nature conservation. The further erosion of the common would add to the threat to the animal species and plants, protected and unprotected, which live there. The woodland presently has much wildlife, including protected species of

dormice, bats and Roman snails. The installation and ongoing use of play structures by concentrated groups of children is not compatible with safeguarding wildlife.

- There would be an adverse effect on ancient woodland. This is one of the principle ancient yew tree sites in Surrey and should be preserved in its natural state. Concentrated and more intensive use of the woodland is not compatible with the need to protect it.
- The financial constraints that Surrey County Council now face make it impossible to understand why they would want to spend such a large sum of money on these play structures. Parking fees are being introduced, against our members' wishes, and these could be kept substantially lower or not introduced at all if the play structures were not built.

For all the above reasons our Membership strongly object to the planning application for the erection of six play structures at Newlands Corner and are of the firm view that the application should be refused.

Yours sincerely

K C Meldrum CB  
Chairman