

19<sup>th</sup> June 2020



**Dear Cabinet Minister(s)**  
**Julie James – Minister for Housing and Local Government**  
**Lesley Griffiths - Minister for Environment, Energy and Rural Affairs**  
**Ken Skates- Minister for Economy, Transport and North Wales**

### **Development of our Green Spaces**

With the enactment of the Environment Act (2016), Wellbeing of Future Generations Act (2015) and Planning Policy Wales 10 (2018), there is great precedent to act to build a better future for all of us amongst and beyond the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic.

It is a crucial time that has highlighted the importance of our cities' and towns' remaining green spaces to their residents – as significant places for our individual health and wellbeing, and perhaps the only spaces going forward to ensure a healthy population and workforce.

We bring to your attention a legacy of planning granted in 1999 – for the open-ended development of the Whitchurch hospital site in Cardiff and the adjacent 23 acre meadow space surrounded on all sides by Forest Farm SSSI Nature Reserve.

Our objection relates to planning application 20/00357/MJR for the extension of variation of conditions IC and 1D of planning application 16/01530/MJR. Both applications are based upon application 95/01195/N, first submitted in 1995. 95/01195/MJR also enables the permission for 17/01735/MJR, the development of the meadow via the destruction of some of the nature reserve. Furthermore, we are asking that you consider these applications in whole, therefore you must also consider applications 20/01108/MJR and 20/01110/MJR.

### **We the undersigned request the call in of application 20/00357/MJR.**

There are **28 applications relating to the Whitchurch Hospital & Whitchurch Meadows site**, we request that through your review you consider the clear need for such developments to be considered as one – each permission granted facilitates the next and the cumulative impact of a permissions granted 20 years ago is multiplied far beyond its stated and considered application at the time of being granted.

The extensive range of applications, extensions and submissions – which negates addressing the sum of their impact on the local area and region demonstrates the **serious procedural issues** relating to this development, including the lack of transparency and accessibility of these planning applications. These fundamentally contravene provisions of Planning Policy Wales 2018, as well as undermining the Future Generations Act and principles of good governance.

The public controversy surrounding the site demonstrates the low level of trust that this development is being made in the public interest. Many community members have never been consulted regarding any of the above named applications, and the onus has been on the community to raise awareness; as demonstrated by the hugely significant increase of objections to application 20/00357/MJR after Save the Northern Meadows called for objections be raised to the development on the 23rd of May.

Additionally, we would like to bring the attention of the following to the Welsh Government.

- The application **20/00357/MJR** and subsequently the potential development of this site is **not** included in the adopted Cardiff Local Development Plan (a requirement of successive Planning Policy Wales versions) and does not meet the requirements of current policy and legislation. References to amenity (5.2), conservation merit (5.28) and nature compensation (5.29) in the application have a **very different meaning today than in 1995**, reflected by the numerous progression of articles such as the Wellbeing and Future Generations Act (2015),

Planning Policy Wales 10, Environment Act (2016) and not least the climate emergency declared by both Welsh Government and Cardiff Council.

- Planning Policy Wales has set out a more **progressive, sustainable and environmentally aware framework** for assessing applications than was applied at the time of the appeal in 1999 of this particular case. The Wales Environment Act 2016 Act 3.0-3.3 specifically sets out how planning decisions must **positively impact on biodiversity, halting loss and enhancing green spaces**. The Chief Planner's letter to Heads of Planning of 23 October 2019 reiterates the duty to secure biodiversity enhancements through development.
- Despite the above positive steps taken by your administration, the Northern Meadow at the Whitchurch hospital site remains under **immediate** threat of development. Home to hundreds of trees, abundant wildlife and the largest heronry in Cardiff, this site is used and enjoyed by hundreds of people every day. It is no doubt just one of many public green spaces across Wales not being protected by current legislation.
- If planning permission is renewed and the development goes ahead, this space will be destroyed forever, without ever being adequately reviewed. There is no new Environmental Statement for application 20/00357/MJR to extend the permission, despite **significant changes in legislation** and increased understanding of the importance of this site for biodiversity and for people.
- Despite its significance to the local community, it is considered by the applicant to have 'limited amenity' only. There has been no Environmental Impact Assessment that considers the whole site of application 95/01195/N. EIA on portions of the site as in 20/00357/MJR and 17/01735/MJR do not give a picture of the true impact development shall have on the whole site. Combined, these applications enable multiple commercial, residential, public and private developments.

**Surely, before any construction begins** on either site local residents must be consulted regarding the impact of both 20/00357/MJR and 17/01735/MJR, as both rely upon 95/01195/N as their basis. Additionally, a full environmental statement must be completed regarding the site of 95/01195/N, as both developments rest upon the precedent set by this application, yet neither consider their impact on the site as a whole.

We request that you **urgently 'call in' the application 20/00357/MJR and ensure a pause to the further named applications relating to the development of Whitchurch Hospital and the surrounding area**. Unless the development is countered we will see the loss of 23 acres of diverse meadow space, an important corridor for wildlife, wild space a 1/3 of the size of the reserve itself as well as access to green space for thousands of Cardiff residents.

Establishing road access to the site will cost **27 million pounds, surely an excessive expense that would be better spent on state of the art patient care**. This expense could be avoided by incorporating the new Cancer Centre into the Heath Hospital Development, or pursuing the Centre on the site of 20/00357/MJR or alongside existing health provision.

We are certain that **any** development is inappropriate for the declining meadow land, as any effort to build here will **significantly disrupt biodiversity in Cardiff and the health and wellbeing of the local community**.

**Truly, all** such historic applications for planning also need to be reconsidered and reviewed by the Welsh Government. This applies even where health facilities are concerned – the biggest thing keeping us healthy and out of hospitals are healthy lifestyles and access to green spaces for exercise, wellbeing and social distancing. Therefore the **significance of this space cannot be overstated**, especially in light of the lockdown. For a community bordered by A roads, the M4 and Junction 32, this green space is crucial.

We the undersigned request that Welsh Government ensure the **call in of 20/00357/MJR**

**Consequently that you do all in your power to represent the people of Whitchurch, Coryton and Cardiff and take immediate action to address the wider development of this site enabled and facilitated through historic planning applications** that will have considerable and unmitigatable impact on our natural environment and our access to green space. This **must** be done in light of the numerous and progressive Acts passed and adopted by the Welsh Government that enshrine protection for future generations, our wellbeing and our biodiversity.

Yours Sincerely

Catherine Lewis

David Kilner

Tessa Marshall

On behalf of the **Save the Northern Meadows Team**

[www.savethenorthernmeadows.wales](http://www.savethenorthernmeadows.wales)

We the undersigned....

**Councillor Mike Phillips**

Whitchurch & Tongwynlais

**Councillor Mia Rees**

Whitchurch & Tongwynlais

**Councillor Linda Morgan**

Whitchurch & Tongwynlais

**Councillor Rhys Taylor**

Lib Dems Cardiff North

**Anthony Slaughter**

Wales Green Party

**Steffan Webb**

Plaid Cymru Cardiff North

**Andrew RT Davies**

Member of Sennedd

South Wales Central

**Alan Wright**

Chair of Hollybush Estate TRA (HETRA)

**Dr Rhys Jones**

Environmental Consultant



Continued overleaf...

**Jenny Hawley**

Policy Manager Plant Life UK



**Clare Dinham**

Wales Manager - Buglife Cymru



**Rhodri Thomas**

Cynnal Cymru/Sustain Wales



**Nerys Lloyd-Pierce**

Chair Cardiff Civic Society



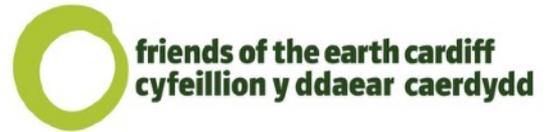
**Penny Bowers**

Chair Friends of Hailey Park



**Friends of the Earth**

**Cardiff**



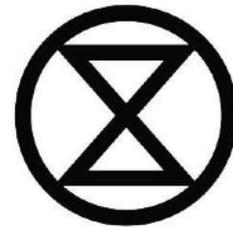
**Cardiff Youth Strike 4 ClimateTeam**



**Cardiff Greenpeace**



**Extinction Rebellion Caerdydd**



**Becca Clark**

Director of Green Squirrel



Adam Johannes on behalf of

**Cardiff People's Assembly**

**Glamorgan Bird Club**



**Mike Currier**

CEO Orbis Education and Care Ty Coryton



**Cylch Meithrin Eglwys Newydd**

CYLCH MEITHRIN

