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29th September 2021

To

Sarah Coburn-Price
Chair - Colne Neighbourhood Plan Advisory Committee
Colne Town Hall Building
Albert Road
Colne
BB8 0AQ

cc Gina Langley - Responsible Financial Officer (RFO)

I am writing to the Committee on behalf of the Barrowford Road Playing Fields Group. The Playing Fields on Barrowford Road, surrounding the old Nelson and Colne College have been re-inserted into the latest Colne Neighbourhood Plan under the category of protected sports and recreation facilities. This is appropriate, given the ongoing demand for such facilities (as confirmed by Pendle Borough Council Parks Department), especially at Junior level.

Maintenance is now well advanced. Four pitches have now been marked out, new goal posts ordered, and further ongoing maintenance planned. It is still expected to take some months of regular maintenance to restore the facility to its former glory due to the many years of neglect and disregard for the S106 Agreement by the College, but excellent progress is now being made.

The resumption of organised sport is expected in the next few weeks.

On the same facility adjoining the pitches is a significant spinney, approximately 100 metres by 35 metres totalling approximately 3500 square metres (yellow boundary line in Figure 1). This adjoins Green Belt land to the west, with a public footpath on its west and south boundaries.

The Barrowford Road Playing Fields Group feel strongly that the substantial spinney should be protected within the Colne Neighbourhood Plan, based on the following rationale and data.

1. Tree preservation orders cover a substantial proportion of the area as depicted on the Pendle Borough website shown in Figure 1 (the green dotted lines).

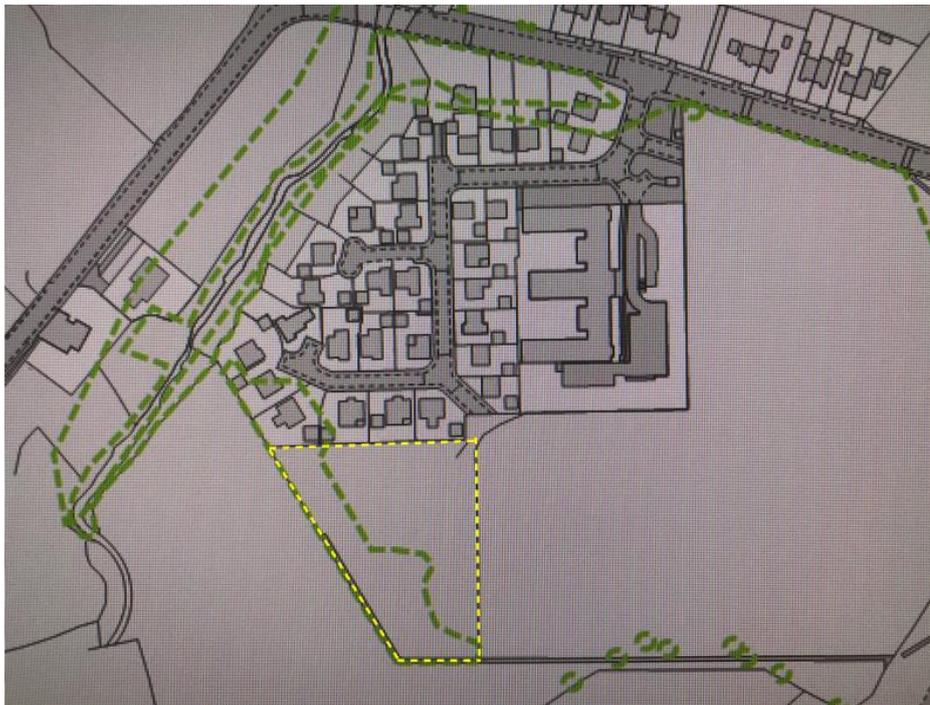


Figure 1

This was confirmed by Lee Johnson, Principal Environment Officer at Pendle Borough Council. It is also worth noting that there has been substantial growth beyond the area specifically covered by tree preservation orders as shown in the pictures below (Figures 2, 3 & 4).



Figure 2



Figure 3



Figure 4

This is now a mature spinney with a significant proportion covered by Tree Preservation Orders, abutting Green Belt to the south and southwest boundaries, and bordering a protected sports and recreation facility to the east which is also allocated as Existing Open Space in the Pendle Local Plan. Along with the landscaping along the northern boundary of the M65 the trees within the spinney provide mitigation against the noise and air pollution from the M65 which can only serve to improve the health benefits derived from the playing fields when used by young local players. It also provides a natural setting to the adjacent Public Right of Way, undoubtedly encouraging greater use of the footpath.

Recognising the Committee's positive stance toward Tree Preservation Orders and Green Infrastructure it would seem a natural conclusion therefore to include protection for this significant woodland within the Neighbourhood Plan.

2. The owners of the land, Nelson and Colne College, have refused our Group permission to enter the woodland to undertake any ecological studies whatsoever, and due to the density and growth it has been difficult to photograph flora and fauna inside the spinney. However, from the periphery, the Barrowford Road Playing Fields Group have managed to photograph bats entering the spinney as per Figure 5.



Figure 5

In addition, barn owls have been seen in the trees whilst hunting in the field on the west side and have been photographed, as per Figure 6, on the edge of the spinney.

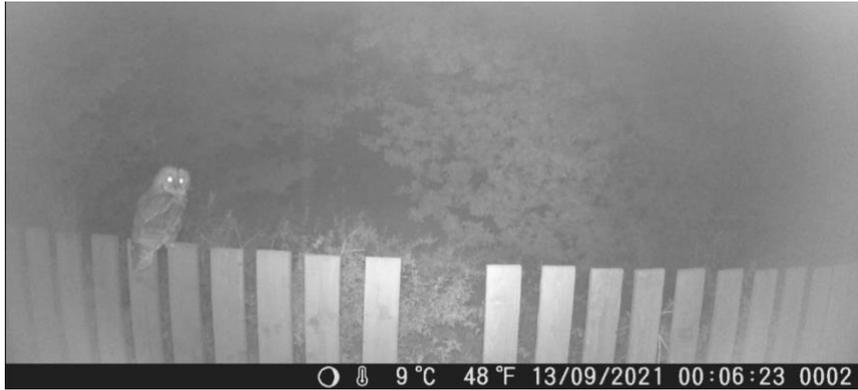


Figure 6

The spinney provides an important habitat for these protected species, which are very important to the ecological balance of the surroundings, and warrant their habitat being protected.

3. The land designation in the Local Plan Part 2 by Pendle Borough Council is P083 which incorporates a large area of the playing fields as well as the spinney. This clearly demonstrates that they consider there is no differentiation between the two areas, and they treat it as one designation, see Figure 7.



Figure 7

Indeed, in the Colne Neighbourhood Plan Proposals Map the area designated as a Recreation Facility also covers the spinney area (Figure 8).



Figure 8

The Barrowford Road Playing Field Group therefore recommends the most expeditious way to protect the spinney is to include it with the playing fields, within the Neighbourhood Plan, to offer protection for its long-term enjoyment and wildlife haven.

ER Thorley

Ernest Richard Thorley

Chairman of Barrowford Road Playing Fields Group