

## Action required NOW to Save Newlands Corner

You may have heard about the significant controversy surrounding Surrey County Council's (SCC) proposals to develop Newlands Corner. We need to object to its proposals at every stage to stop this commercialisation. SCC's first step is to introduce car park charges and for this it needs to erect parking charge machines on the site.

Newlands Corner, including the car park, is registered common land, managed by Surrey Wildlife Trust (SWT) on behalf of SCC. The placing of fixed structures on common land needs to be approved by the Planning Inspectorate (part of the Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs). On 14 September, SCC submitted an application to the Planning Inspectorate for the introduction of three parking charge machines onto the common. If you want more information about the planning process for all of SCC's proposals, see the information paper we have produced. It is linked on the 'Action Required' page under 'Planning Information' or follow this link; <https://savenewlandscornerdotcom.files.wordpress.com/2016/09/planning-information.pdf>

It doesn't sound like much. But the implications of this are **very significant**, not only for Newlands Corner and the many thousands who simply want it left as it is, open, natural and beautiful, but also for surrounding villages and other countryside sites.

SCC wants to introduce 24-hour car parking charges as it is no longer prepared to pay to 'maintain' the site. It would also use the money generated to help pay for the upkeep of other sites in Surrey.

SCC plans to increase the number of vehicles visiting Newlands Corner each year from 255,000 to a massive 365,000. We consider the only way this can be accommodated is by enlarging the car park. SCC has said that it wants to "restructure" it, without saying the word "enlarge". So, more of the common seems destined to be buried under tarmac.

SCC also wants to place large artificial play structures on the site. It believes that they would attract increased numbers of visitors - effectively turning Newlands Corner into a play park. The cost of installation and upkeep of the play structures would be met from the parking charges, whether people used them or not. Significantly, a SWT feasibility study stated that, without the attraction of these structures, the parking charge scheme was unlikely to be viable.

Long term, the plan is to introduce a large, new visitor's centre with a restaurant, "retail space" and coach park.

But the proposals not only impact on the site itself:

- Increased vehicle movements, including coaches, would multiply the dangers on the highway at the entrance - which is already a known danger.
- Displacement would take place – people parking on surrounding streets, verges or in the nearby villages of Shere and Albury (affecting businesses and residents) in order to avoid parking charges.
- These and other already beleaguered villages would have to cope with increased levels of traffic.
- Some low-income groups, including families, would not be able to afford to go there. In response to this, the chairman of SWT was quoted in a recent Surrey Advertiser article as saying that if people wanted free parking there were other places for them to go.
- 'The People's Trust for Endangered Species' has recently reported on the threatened extinction of hazel dormice in Britain. SCC's proposals threaten Newlands Corner's own population of these shy, endearing creatures through noise pollution and vehicle emissions.

SCC has tried to downplay the cost of parking at Newlands Corner, as if it would be negligible. However, it has given no guarantees about the future scale of parking charges. SWT's feasibility study has indicated very steep rises to come, suggesting the first rise to be 20% within one to two years, with 10% rises in each of the following years.

**All of this would come about because of three parking charge machines on Newlands Corner.**

Many of us go to Newlands Corner for the sheer exhilaration of experiencing its unspoilt, natural openness, and fantastic views. A significant number also go there to get away from it all, to recharge their batteries or to gain comfort or solace from the memories it brings back of family days out. All of this would change. The proposals would introduce commerciality and artificiality to this Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB). It is, therefore, not in the interests of the neighbourhood (one of the criteria considered by the Planning Inspectorate) to introduce any of these measures.

The National Association of AONBs says an AONB "is exactly what it says it is: an outstanding landscape whose distinctive character and natural beauty are so precious that it is in the nation's interest to safeguard them". It goes on to say "Because of their fragile natural beauty the primary purpose of AONB designation is to conserve and enhance the natural beauty of the landscape". Everything SCC and SWT are proposing goes against these principles.

11,000 people have already signed a petition against the proposals. At a public meeting, 99.9% of attendees rejected the proposals. Hundreds of people have written to SCC or their councillors in protest. SCC and SWT are claiming to have listened, but are totally ignoring this and pressing on.

**The Planning Inspector must be shown that this application is inappropriate, would lead to the degradation of Newlands Corner and is deeply unpopular.**

To do this, Appendix 1 gives information about the application and suggests the sort of things you might want to object to.

Please also see the information sheet at Appendix 2, which gives you lots of background and sets out our concerns about all of the proposals.

Keep up to date by registering your email address (kept strictly confidential) with the campaign website [www.savenewlandscorner.com](http://www.savenewlandscorner.com).

If you need any further information, please contact us through the website.

Please help to save Newlands Corner. **Every objection is vital. Please object by 21 October**

**Save Newlands Corner**