

## Save Newlands Corner Campaign Group

### Reasons for opposing the application

#### How to object

The Planning Inspectorate will only consider objections to the play structures themselves. The deadline for representations is Friday, 7 July. They should be sent to:

**Email:** commonlandcasework@pins.gsi.gov.uk

**Or write to:** Planning Inspectorate, Commons Team at 3F Temple Quay House, Temple Quay, Bristol. BS1 6PN

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

**Remember:**

- You must include your name and address
- Use your own words as far as possible
- Keep objections focused on the play structures

#### Save Newlands Corner's objections

- There would be no direct benefit to the common. There would be an erosion of the common to no good purpose. The natural environment already provides more play opportunities than the structures ever would. The structures would be a distraction from nature.
- There is no benefit to the neighbourhood or to the wider public interest, quite the opposite. Artificial play structures are already available elsewhere in the area. Local people have shown overwhelmingly they do not want these play structures and they have not asked for them. They want their children to experience natural countryside and wildlife.
- Installing large artificial structures would adversely affect the landscape. In an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB), there is a duty to conserve and enhance the natural beauty of the landscape.
- The plan to attract more visitors and increase vehicle number from 255,000 to 365,000 per year over 4 years is not in line with the AONB requirement for low-key, long-term action. This intensity of visitors and cars would damage the environment at Newlands Corner and make the A25 even more dangerous.
- 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". These are not 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. It is the only place that they can find true quiet enjoyment of Newlands Corner and SCC intends to put the play structures along it. "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.

- 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 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.

### **Planning Inspectorate's assessment criteria**

When assessing an application, the Planning Inspectorate will take into account:

- The interests of persons having rights in relation to, or occupying the land – in this case the Albury Estate (landowners) and Surrey County Council (managers)
- The interests of the neighbourhood (positive benefits, loss of existing use, future use and enjoyment)
- The public interest (including the public interest in nature conservation, the conservation of the landscape, the protection of public rights of access to any area of land; effects on Recreation and access, Nature conservation, Impact on the landscape)
- Any other matter considered to be relevant

### **Other considerations**

- Commons should be maintained or improved as a result of the works being proposed. Section 38 is viewed as conferring additional protection on common land, rather than enabling common land to be used for purposes inconsistent with its origin, status and character. In other words, consent should be seen as a gateway, which enables the construction of works which are sympathetic to the continuing use and enjoyment of common land, but which reinforces controls on development which are inappropriate or harmful.

- Are the works consistent with the use and enjoyment of the land as common land?

- The Planning Inspectorate will wish to establish whether the proposed works are consistent with the use and enjoyment of the land as common land.

- It will have regard to the following matters: • Conservation of biodiversity • Conservation of flora, fauna, geological or physiographical features —• Conservation of habitats • Conservation and enhancement of Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty — the duty (in relation to an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty) is to have regard to the purpose of conserving and enhancing the natural beauty of the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty

All of this is explained in greater depth in 'Common Land consents policy' which can be found at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/common-land-consents-policy> . We encourage you to read this document as it is important in terms of how the Inspectorate will view your objection.